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Joseph D. T. Jr.

RED SLAYER.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAVERN HOME.

"CALL in your dog!" cried a clear voice. "Call him in, I say. I am too much a hunter to wish to do a noble animal like that a mischief."

The speaker stood in the midst of a savage wilderness, a few miles to the north of the Mohawk, above Schenectady, or where that city now stands. He was a young man, in a sort of half-military, half-hunter's garb, of some dark-green stuff, as nearly as possible of the hue of the forest-leaves. Just in front of him crouched a dark-colored hound, looking at him out of red and fiery eyes. In the face of the young man, standing with a pistol held loosely in one hand, you could read inflexible courage and strong purpose. His face was handsome, and as yet showed but little beard. His complexion was dark, evidently the result of forest life. Another pistol, like the one he held in his hand, was hanging in his belt, beside a long knife. He held a rifle in his disengaged hand. A voice was heard from the recesses of the forest, calling to the dog, who turned back sullenly. Immediately after, the bushes parted, and a man came out into view. A strange man he was, clad in greasy buckskin, tattered by contact with the bushes, and whose face was almost as dark as that of the savages who roamed through these wild regions. Something over six feet in height, and erect as a pine, he was armed with a rifle of great length, a heavy hatchet, and a long knife. There was something so fierce in his aspect and manner, that the young man was startled. The dog left the place he had taken before him, and crouched at his master's feet, who leaned upon his long rifle, grasping it in his bare and sinewy hands, and did not speak a word for some moments.

"Down, Peril," he said, in a hoarse voice. "Down, I say.

Can't you tell the difference between a white man and the Indians you hate so deadly? Who are you, sir?"

"My name is Warren Champlin," said the young man, "and I am here on a mission to the Caunagawa Mohawks. Perhaps you can direct me."

"I have nothing to do with the Mohawks," said the other, savagely. "Do not speak to me of Indians. They are a treacherous, black-hearted crew. I have heard men speak of good Indians; I never saw them—I never expect to see them. The black curse of a heart that never sleeps fall on them. I hate them all."

"We think the Mohawks are our friends," said the young leader.

"Friends? They are friends to no man. But, come; go with me to my home. I would see a white man's face once more beside my fire."

"Who are you?" said Champlin.

"A hunter."

"Nothing more?"

"No more—no less; a man who lives apart from all mankind. For twelve years I have made these deserted places my home. A savage place to dwell, you will say. No matter, so that it suits my purpose. Here I dwell among rugged rocks and forest trees, working out the purpose of my life."

"You have a purpose, then?"

"Who has not? I will live here until that purpose is accomplished. When that is done, I shall be eager to end all by death. You look strangely at me; you do not understand my purpose, nor do I mean to tell you. I only say that night approaches, and if you would rest in safety, there is no better place than in my den. Will you come?"

"Gladly. I am afraid I have lost the trail," said Champlin.

"I will set you right in the morning, if you care to go to my place."

"I will go," replied Warren.

Without another word, the strange man threw his rifle into the hollow of his arm, and led the way. It was by a rugged and dangerous path, up one of the limestone hills which

abound in that section. They halted for a moment beside a clear, bright spring, and the hunter, stooping, took up some of the water in the hollow of his hand and drank greedily. Warren followed his example, but spat the water out of his mouth immediately.

"Faugh! How can you drink it? The most filthy water I ever tasted."

"Yet it is good for the health," said the hunter. "I want no better medicine than I can find in these springs. Doctors have little to do with me. If I am ailing, I come to this spring and drink. In after days, doubtless these waters will be famous."

His words were prophetic. He was drinking at a spring which, in our day, has become one of the most famous of watering-places.

"It is an acquired taste," he continued. "When I first drank I could scarcely swallow it, but now I would drink it sooner than the best wine which ever sparkled on the board of Sir William. Are you satisfied? Come on, then."

"You do not speak like a common hunter," said Warren. "The language you use is far above it."

"Do I dress like a hunter?" said the other, sneeringly. "Come, my lad, do not be inquisitive. I am older than you, and know more of these matters. No man ever got rich or famous in trying to pry into the affairs of others."

"I have no such design," said Warren, coloring.

"That is well. Take what I said kindly. My life here makes me as savage as the wild things by which I am surrounded. If I am rude and blunt, do not mind it. We are nearing my home."

"I see no sign of any hut," said Warren, looking about him.

"Do you not? Look there."

They stood at the foot of a limestone bluff, which rose a hundred feet into the air. An irregular path led up the slope, almost perpendicular, and half-way up the face of the bluff was a dark opening.

"I see no hut yet," said Warren.

"Nor will you," answered the hunter. "My home is here. Follow me."

Throwing his rifle over his shoulder, he began to climb with the agility of a mountain goat, holding on by his hands and feet. A few steps brought them to the mouth of a cavity in the limestone, into which the man crept on his hands and knees, and was followed by Warren without hesitation. The dog had gone before them, and they could hear him in front.

"Stand up," said the leader; "you are in my house."

Warren obeyed, and as soon as his eyes became accustomed to the light of the place, he saw that they were in an irregular-shaped cavern, about fifteen feet square, which nature had cut out in the limestone. There was a funnel-shaped cavity in the roof, through which he could see the blue sky. A sort of rude fireplace had been made in one side of the cavern, formed from the small bowlders of limestone which had been chipped from the sides of the cave. These were blackened by smoke and flame, and reddened here and there by the blood of game. Part of a deer was pendent from one side of the low room, and upon the branching antlers of a buck hung several weapons, powder-horns and knives.

The hunter sat down upon one of the small bowlders before the fireplace, and began to stir the embers. Then he went to an opening which Warren had not before noticed, and reappeared immediately after, carrying in his arms a bundle of sticks, which he laid upon the coals, and directly after a cheerful flame went leaping upward, and the smoke rose through the funnel in the roof. When this was done, he set about cooking some steaks from the buck, which he did with the manner of one accustomed to the work. When all was done, he laid them upon a smooth, flat stone in the center of the room and piled beside them some small cakes of corn-bread.

"Eat," he said, quickly. "You must be hungry."

"I am rather sharp set," said the young man, with a light laugh. "You will excuse me if I punish your steaks dreadfully."

"Eat," repeated the hunter. "Make no ceremony here. If you were not welcome, you would not be here. I am not one to invite everybody to my den. Not that I am proud. I care not who knows that I live here alone, upon the mountain side, but all men shall not intrude upon me. I like your

face. It reminds me of the days when I was like you, young, ardent, full of life and spirit, and with high hopes for the future. Now all that is left me is my rifle, my dog, and this dark place to dwell in."

"Surely you have friends?" said Warren.

"Friends! What has such a man as I to do with friends? My purpose does not make them necessary. I have no friends."

"You say you have lived here long?"

"Twelve years. You look at me in wonder. You can not see how a man can content himself to live apart from his kind so many weary years. It is hard to understand. I wish it was in my power to tell you, but I have no confidants. My work can be done by me alone."

"You take sides with England in this quarrel with France?" said Warren.

"England and France may fight their battles, without any aid of mine," was the sullen reply. "I care nothing for either. England does little to protect these colonies from the savage foe. I hate the Indians. There is no good tribe; not one. I and my faithful dog will be the enemies of the red-skin while life shall last. But eat, eat. I am keeping you from the ~~land~~?"

They pushed the stones upon which they had been sitting close to the rude table and sat down. There was little observance of the rules of etiquette in that meal. Their fingers were made to serve in place of forks, but they did not relish the food the less that it was taken in this way. When both were satisfied, they rose, and the hunter asked Warren to come out and see his observatory.

"Where is that?" said Warren, with a slight laugh.

"You shall see," said the hunter. "This way."

He led the way into the opening from which he had brought the wood. It was another cavern, somewhat larger than the first, filled with wood for fuel. A narrow passage was left through the pile. They passed, and came to a low "run" or rift like the one by which they had entered the first room. Passing through this, they came out upon a shelf some ten feet wide by twenty long, from which they had a delightful view of the surrounding country. Far in the distance they

could make out the Mohawk, winding like a silver thread through the country, bordered by green banks and shaded here and there by forest trees.

"Beautiful," said Warren. "There is no such country as this in all the earth."

"Yes, it is beautiful," said the hunter. "But there is a curse upon it—a curse which nothing can wipe away but the flow of blood."

"What do you mean?"

"The Indians. They are a black curse to any soil."

"Why do you hate them so?"

"Ask no questions, boy; nor let me hear you defend the red devils. You go on a mission to the Mohawks. It is right for you to do your duty and go where you are sent. Nevertheless, do not trust them. The red blood is in their veins and it will out."

"I shall take care, and I thank you for the caution."

"There is no need to thank me. See, I can stand here and watch the parties go up and down the river. You see what a wild, almost inaccessible place I dwell in. If they found me out, I could defend myself against a tribe of the black villains. There is but one path, and that, defended by a desperate man, could be made a bloody path to them."

"It could indeed," said Warren. "I thought of that when we came up. Provisioned for a siege you could hold out while your food did."

They reentered the cavern and sat down again. Warren found his strange host well informed upon the haunts and habits of the various tribes, though he spoke of them all with the utmost rancor. His hatred of the savages was something terrible. But, warned by his rebuke, Warren did not again ask him the reason.

When the cavern became dark, the hunter lighted a pitch-pine torch, and thrust it into a crevice in the rock, where it smoked and sputtered while they talked. He showed great interest in the towns which the whites were building up; but seemed to know little of them.

"Why do you not visit one of the settlements?" said Warren. "It is not far to Schenectady."

"Why should I go there?" he answered. "It would only

remind me of that which I have lost. No, sir. I have turned my back forever upon these things, and must never again expect to meet with those of my kind."

" Yet I can not believe you have committed a crime which bars you out from them."

" No crime. It is not my fault that I can not go among them. Have you heard the French are gathering upon the borders again?"

" Some rumors to that effect have come to us," said Warren. " But we do not know if they are true."

" Then let me warn you. A bloody day is coming—a day full of sadness. The Caunagawa Mohawks, a tribe I hate above all others, with French leaders, less pitiful than they, will come down on the border; and when they come, woe to exposed towns like Schenectady! I give you this warning. See that you take it."

" How do you know this?"

" Do not ask me. The warning ought to be enough for you. I say once for all that they will come. I have my means of knowing. When the Indians come down, they will have at least one enemy in their path."

" And that enemy—"

" I! They know me, the devils! They have heard my name and tremble. They whisper it to one another beside the fires. They say it low, and in tones of dread. Ha! ha! ha! How I have seen the red knaves quiver when they heard my shout in the forest! Bah, I have said too much."

He rose, and from the antlers on the wall took down two bear-skins, which he flung upon the floor on each side of the fire. Signing to Warren to take one of them, he threw off his hunting-shirt and flung himself down upon the other. Warren lay down, but could not sleep for some time. The strange surroun-lings drove rest from his eyelids. At length nature yielded to fatigue and he slept.

CHAPTER II.

"NUMBER 3 P"

WHEN he woke it was getting lighter in the cave and he rose. He could see nothing of his friend. Both he and his dog had gone out. For the want of occupation, Warren crept through the opening at the back of the cave and came out upon the platform. A gray mist was rising slowly from the valley, and the sun was just peeping up from the east. Looking out into the misty veil in which the earth was shrouded, through which objects loomed up vaguely, Warren heard a loud cry from the valley, followed by the crack of a rifle. Then all was silent for some moments, when the hunter came hurrying up the slope, panting as if from a recent run, and climbed hastily to the cave. The dog was with him, bounding quickly along, as if overjoyed at something. As they came nearer, Warren could see that the muzzle of the horn was reddened with blood.

"My friend has found game," said Warren, to himself. He left the platform and went back to the outer cave. The hunter was there before him. Warren was astonished at the change in his face; a sort of lofty joy irradiated his whole countenance. Something had happened. He looked up quickly as he heard the step of the young man.

"Where have you been?" he cried, almost angrily; "why did you not stay in the cave?"

"I have not left it," replied the young man. "I have been on the platform."

"What did you see; what did you hear?" said he, anxiously.

"I heard a cry not long since as of a human being in distress, accompanied by the report of a rifle. The Indians must be about here."

"I heard it, too," said the hunter. "You are right. Indians are in the woods. And let me tell you that your mission wth the Mohawks will be useless. They are in the forest

already and bound for the murder of whites along the frontier. Schenectady itself is in danger. Back, therefore, and warn them of the approaching savages before it is too late."

"I can not turn back until I have kept my appointment with a chief who promised to meet me at the forks of the river, where it joins the Horicon," said the other. "My duty is plain. If he says that the Indians have dug up the hatchet, I will return."

"Do you think the sly knave will tell you that?" said the hunter. "Have it your own way, however. What will be, will be. Young men will be rash. Willful men must have their way, and you will only wake to a sense of your foolishness when you feel the knife of the savage busy at your scalp. However, I will set you on your way and then go back to my own work. The Maledawks! There is not a more treacherous set of knaves in the whole earth."

"You may be right. But, if we can only get their friendship, they will serve for a defense against marauding bands of the Hurons and their French allies, who are far more treacherous than they are."

"There is but one Frenchman on the face of this earth against whom my hate is deadly, and woe to him when he comes under my hand. Let him look out. I will follow him, but *his death comes last*."

"What is his name?"

"A villain whom the devil will reject—a man marked by hundred ghastly and horrible crimes. Woe to him, when he comes within reach of my arm."

"You hate him very much. He must have done you some great and deadly wrong."

"So great, that his death alone will not be sufficient atonement! So great, that I would see him die by lingering torture, while I stood by and laughed to see him writhe. I have started up from my sleep with curses against him on my lips all the night after kin. That is because I never forgot him, walking or sleeping. That is because I have a sort of picture of him always on my brain, as perfect as I saw him yesterday. And yet it was full twelve years ago, when I saw him, and I have never looked upon his face since that sad time!"

"What is he like?"

"He was a boy then, not more than twenty-two. That would make him thirty-four now. Tall and straight; a black eye, with a look of the devil in it; a white face, as delicately cut as a woman's:—a beautiful man. *Min*, did I say? A demon in human form. There is only one Louis Dantern in the whole earth. Say no more. Let us be on our way."

"What did you mean by telling me just now that the Indians are in the woods?"

"It is the eastern branch of the great Mohawk tribe, under the lead of a Frenchman, whose name I did not learn. They mean mischief. Be assured of that."

"Indians, led by Frenchmen, always mean mischief," said Warren. "Do you know who fired that ride just now?"

"How should I?"

"You were out. I did not know but you were near the spot."

"I was. But, why do you badger me with questions? Don't you know by this time that I am averse to them? But you are one of those who will not take warning. I have half a mind to leave you to your fate. You would deserve it. Here, Peril. Go in front."

"There is blood up on the dog's muzzle," cried Warren, hastily.

"Is there? Now, by the mercy of Heaven, your eyes are too sharp. Young man, I like you very well, else I would not have brought you here. But, I am mistaken in you. I did not think you would be likely to trouble me by so many questions, else you would have staid in the woods. One more, are you coming, or shall we stay here till to-night?"

"I will trouble you no more," said Warren. "I beg your pardon."

"Say no more," replied the hunter, testily. "But follow me as quickly as you can and let us have no more words about the matter."

They descended the rocks with cautious steps, for it was by no means an easy path to travel. Once on the level ground below they walked rapidly forward. The hunter was tall and thin, and went with his head bent forward. Peril walked

in front with stately steps, snuffing at the air as he moved. The hunter did not say a word, and Warren thought it best not to break the silence while he was in this humor. An angry gleam was in the eyes of the dog. The hair upon his back stood erect, but he uttered no sound.

"Down, Peril," said the hunter. "What do you see, boy?"

The dog shook his heavy body from side to side and uttered a low, sullen growl.

"He smells blood," said the hunter. "Let me see where it is. Either a man or beast has been slain near this spot."

"It was close to this place that I heard the rifle," said Warren. "Doubtless the bullet found a victim."

"Show the way, Peril," replied the hunter, with a strange laugh. "If there is any thing here, the dog can find it."

Peril turned aside at the order, and went through a little path which led up a slope. It was at this point that they saw a break in the trees, and passing on, they entered a small opening. The anger of the dog seemed to increase. His hair rose erect and he quickened his pace. A great tree lay in the middle of the opening, where it had been torn up by the roots. The dog leaped the log, and Warren had placed his hand on the trunk to follow, when he started back with a low cry of surprise, for an Indian lay there, dead, and over him stood the dog, with his foot upon his breast, growling.

The Indian was a stalwart fellow, in the dress of the Cau-nigawa Mohawk. He had been shot through the heart, and lay there with the look of horror frozen upon it which sudden death leaves upon the human face. A savage looking warrior with a hooked nose, and an eye which must have been terrible in life, glaring wide open at the face of the young man. His dead hand gripped a hatchet, as if at the instant of his death he was preparing to leap upon the spot. A gun lay beside him, where it had fallen when he dropped. Besides the wound in his breast, his throat was lacerated, as if his enemy, not content with shooting him down, had taken delight in mutilating his body. But, what attracted the attention of the young man most was a thin strip of birch-bark which was placed upon the breast of the Indian, near the wound. Upon it was written, in the *blood of the savage*, and apparently traced by the finger of the slayer,

“NUMBER 31”

“SLAIN BY THE LIFE-HUNTER”

“This is terrible,” said the young man. “Who is this, who not only shoots his enemy down, but lacerates his body, and leaves his mark upon it in this way? It is fearful.”

“A Mohawk,” replied the hunter, sternly. “The man who did this deed doubtless had as good a reason as man ever had, to slay this Indian. I knew the savage well—a bloody-minded, scalping, thieving wretch, who boasted that he had taken more white scalps than any other warrior in the tribe.”

“Doubtless he deserved his fate. Let him at least have decent burial.”

“Let him rot where he lies,” cried the hunter, furiously. “Give him burial? Did he ever give it to his victims? Besides, what have we to do with him? Let us go on.”

“I do not like to leave a human being to the mercy of a wolf,” replied Warren.

“Do you call that thing human?” was the angry reply. “You know nothing of an Indian then. There is no trace of human feeling in his black heart. The thief delighted in the slaughter of white men, and he shall not be buried!”

“I do not ask you to do it; I will bury him myself,” replied Champlin.

“I say you shall not do it. The devil take you! Why do you interfere? I say he shall lie there until rot! I should like to see you lay a hand upon him. Watch him, Peril!”

The dog lay down beside the body, with his head between his paws, directing a savage glance at Warren, which he understood. But he was a brave man, and not accustomed to be threatened, and he at once drew a pistol from his belt, and aimed at the hound. The latter half rose from the ground, and seemed about to leap upon the young man, when the hunter threw himself between.

“Back, Peril,” he cried. “Lie down. Man, do you know what you would do? The lion in his native wilds is not so fearless as that dog, and if you missed him, or failed to kill him outright, you would be dragged down and trampled upon. Do you wish to quarrel with me? If you intend a laying the Indian, you shall do it; but I go no further with you in that case.”

"I do not insist. It is not of sufficient moment to risk a quarrel with you about. I will say no more about it."

"I wonder why it is I do not leave you to your fate, boy. There is something strange in this. I, who have long ceased to have any companionship with my kind—I, the recluse and wild hunter—I, the outcast, ought certainly to feel no love for any man. Yet something draws me to you. I ask you to let this man lie here. I will give him all the burial he deserves."

"Thank you," said Warren. "I am glad to have your good opinion. Let us go on. I care nothing about the Indian, but your manner of speaking nettled me. I can not bear any thing looking like compulsion."

"I am not used to contradiction either," said the hunter. "Come away, Peril. Let the villain lie there. A strange fancy in the man who killed him to put that card upon his breast, and smear that ominous number upon it, in his own blood. A strange thing. What has got into the dog? Come away, Peril. You need not watch it longer; your duty is done."

The dog left the body sullenly, and came to his master, who patted him on the head, while the huge beast fawned upon him.

"We have been through so many dangers together, Peril and I, that we are close friends. If you knew him as well as I do, you would think twice before you raised your hand against him. I never saw the man yet whom I would not sooner fight than my dog. Call him; see if he will come to you."

Warren called the dog. Peril looked at him with his head on one side, and then came slowly up to him, sniffed at him and submitted to a caress, after which he returned to his master's feet.

"That is what no other man in this colony can do," cried the hunter, delighted. "I knew I could not be wrong. I ask you to be friendly to me. I never had a friend, and whatever I am to others, I will always be a friend to you."

"I accept your friendship," said Warren. "You are the sort of ally I would choose for this savage wilderness. Let us go."

They passed out of the narrow path, leaving the warrior to rot where he had fallen. Before they had gone a hundred yards, they heard sounds which told them that the wolves had already scented their prey.

"His bones will whiten under the summer sky," muttered the hunter. "Number 3! A strange fancy. Ha! ha! ha! What a droll dog that man must be."

For some miles not a sound was heard. The two men paced on in silence, and the dog walked in front. The men were too much occupied by their own thoughts to speak to each other. Warren was just embarking upon a dangerous mission, and he had looked upon death already. He did not understand the death of the savage. Who had killed him? For what reason had the man who laid him low placed that ominous number upon his bleeding breast? How many more savages were in the woods, and how would they use him if he met them? The more he thought upon it the less he liked it.

"Confound it!" he said. "What has stirred up the Indians to take the war-trail now? I don't understand it."

"Frenchmen," replied the other, in his abrupt manner. "They are at the bottom of all mischief of that kind."

"Who is the man who killed the Mohawk? Have you any idea?"

"The Life-Hunter, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"He is something or somebody who is a puzzle to the savages who live north of the Mohawk, and especially the tribe of this man we saw to-day. For some reason, no matter what, he is at enmity with the nation, and does his best to destroy them. I have heard it said that every one he slays has his mark affixed, as we saw it upon the body we have just left."

"That can hardly be. If he is such an inveterate foe of the Indians, surely he has killed more than three of them."

"I have found Indians lying dead before now, who had his mark upon them, but I did not see the mark upon the breast. It was only a mark like a diamond, cut with a knife upon the forehead, with 'L. H.' in the center."

"It is barbarous to mutilate a dead enemy," said Warren.

"That is as people look at it. For my part, I do not hesitate to say he serves the Indians just right. Perhaps that is for the reason that I hate the hounds as badly as he does. The bloody dogs have given me good reason to hate them."

"Are we not nearing the river?"

"Yea. Hark!"

They stopped and listened. A sullen and continuous roar, like that of the surf of the ocean, came to their ears from the south. The hunter paused with uplifted hand and a pleased expression upon his face.

"Hark to the music of God's own making," he said. "Do you know what it is?"

"I can not say that I do," replied Warren. "What is it?"

"Little Falls," said the hunter. "We are within a mile of the rapids."

"Push on, then," said Warren, eagerly. "As long as I have been in the country, I never saw the falls."

They hurried forward, and shortly after came out upon the river-bank, in sight of one of the most beautiful cascades in the universe.

CHAPTER III.

THE IRISHMAN'S DANGER.

God's hand in nature seems most sublime in such works as these. A great body of water, tumbling over lofty rocks and pluming into the depths below, with a sound like distant thunder. As the water reached the brink, it seemed to hurry in its course and then rush downward with redoubled force. Warren stood awestruck, gazing at the cataract, and thinking of the days when the hand of Omnipotent Power rent these massive rocks to form a passage for the river's onward course.

"There are a great many falls in this valley," said the hunter—"more than most people know. But the greatest of all is at the head of the Ontario, at Niagara. You have never seen it, I suppose. You think this a grand sight. But what

would you think if you had stood, as I have, below that stupendous cataract, and seen the water plunging down from such a height into the gulf underneath? You have no idea of the depth of water there. This is a cascade compared with it. Yet these are not to be despised."

"I should think not," said Warren. "It is wonderful. I would give much to see these falls you speak of."

"There is something in looking at Niagara different from the feeling with which we see a waterfall like this," replied the other. "There may be higher falls than Niagara. It is not that. But the body of water is so vast, and its force so resistless, that we have a feeling of awe in our hearts, and acknowledge the Great Head. There are more beautiful falls, in this colony. If you had gone into the Mohawk country you might have seen several. They are on the east fork of the river to which we are now on the march. Not exactly falls, either, but a succession of beautiful cascades, beyond anything of the kind I ever saw."

"You must have traveled far," said Warren in surprise.

"There is not a river or lake in this country upon whose banks I have not, at some time, set my foot," answered the hunter. "My duty leads me to wander, in search of something which I fear can never be found. Let us go on."

They clambered up the rocks and reached the talus land at the head of the falls. Warren walked to the edge of the cliff and looked down at the boiling cauldron into which the water dropped. He tossed a piece of wood into the stream above, and saw the resistless current drag it downward to the depths below. It plunged, and was gone.

"Not much chance for a man in that place," he said, drawing back.

"No. He would whirl to and fro in the depths of the eddy until the reluctant water was forced to cast him off. I saw an Indian go over there once—a strong swimmer, who had attempted to cross the stream above. In some way he had doubled his distance and the current swept him down. When I came here, the current was stronger than ever, but he had turned his head upstream, and, incredible as it may seem, he actually held his own for a moment. It was only for a moment, for then he began to give way, slowly, slowly,

fighting desperately for life. I hate an Indian above all earthly things, but I tried to save that man. While I live, I can not forget the expression of his face as he neared the brink, still swimming, as an Indian swims. They do not use their arms as a white man does, but thrust out first one hand and then the other. They get through the water quickly, however. This red-skin was the best swimmer I ever saw. You are standing on the very spot where I was when he went down. Do you see that place where the water looks so green? There, I mean, where the stick is going over. That is the spot where he disappeared. He kept up his courage well, and never uttered a sound. I even saw him, as he crossed the brink, strike out desperately as if still in the water. It was a terrible sight. I could not save him."

"Poor fellow. If he had come nearer the shore you might have done it."

"Yes. I lay flat upon the rock there and reached out a branch to him. He could not reach it, and I saw him go down. He was a Delaware. I have less hatred of that tribe than any other. If he had been a Mohawk and had shown such courage, I would have tried to save him then."

They went up the river, and had not gone a hundred yards when Warren uttered a shout and pointed out into the stream. A man, seated astride of a canoe, was trying to cross. He knew best why he did not get into the canoe. He was using a paddle awkwardly enough. The river was not very wide at that point, and Warren recognized the person. It was Con O'Hara, a fellow who had been a sort of henchman of his in the village of Schenectady, and who had taken it sadly to heart that his companion refused to let him go into the Mohawk country with him, as he wished to perfect himself as a guide and scout.

"Do you know him?" cried the hunter. "He is in danger."

"Yes. I know the Helderberg well enough," said the older, in a quiet tone. "Why has he followed me? I have left a mark to have him follow me. He is a clever fellow, though. What are we to do?"

"What is ready?" asked the hunter. "A knife, and a long stick to stop his pipe. The current will sweep him down."

As he spoke they saw the Irishman balance the paddle nicely upon the bottom of the canoe—for he had turned her bottom upward—and begin to work with a flint and steel at a short pipe which he had thrust between his teeth. Warren shouted to him, and the fellow looked up with a start. The movement tilted the canoe, and as Con hung on for dear life the paddle slipped off into the water, and floated away, leaving him at the mercy of the current.

"You born blockhead," shouted Warren. "What are you going to do now?"

"Sure I'll let her float, master dear," said Con, naively. "She'll bring up somewhere, sure."

"She will bring up at the bottom of a fall thirty feet high," roared Warren. "Can't you swim?"

"Not enough to sing about. Falls? That's them?"

"Don't you know?" said Warren.

"Sorra bit do I know."

"You will find out in just five minutes. Don't you hear it roar?"

Con listened and began to have an inkling of the truth. "Arrah, the devil fly away wid this ob-slit base av a boat! Sure I thried to sit in her, but the brute w'u'd turn over wid me. Arroo! Whidoo! Help me out, some way. T'le the devil wid you, Master Warren, why couldn't ye stay at home like an illigant b'y, an' not be af'er leadin' me astirry? Who! Help me out! I'll be dhownded! Hark til the falling water! Get a rope! Cut down a tree! Save me, somehow! Arroo! I'm dhownded now; I have to drown!"

The two men dashed into the water and swam toward the canoe. The hunter took a circuit and picked up the paddle. Con clung desperately to the boat.

"Get off," said Warren.

"Pint fur? Sure I'll put out me pipe."

"Get off, I say. Let us turn the canoe over. Not many one but a donkey like you would ride on the bottom of a canoe in that way."

"Arrah, but she rides the easier that way," said Con. "I'm well content to stay here. Push me till the shore."

Warren laid his hand upon the collar of the Irishman to drag him from the canoe. He resisted stoutly and made such

a tumult that the young man thought better of it and suffered him to remain. They pushed the canoe to the shore, where he dismounted from his fractious steed, bestowing a benediction upon it more forcible than elegant.

"Let them ride ye that likes it, me darlist. Sorta a time will Con O'Hara go in ye ag'in."

"Now that you are on shore," said Warren, "tell me how you came here."

"Sure an' I walked," said the Irishman; "I'd 'a' rode, only I couldn't stale a horse."

"That subterfuge will not do. Why did you come here?"

"Because I t'ought I c'u'd find ye hereabouts," said Con.

"Do you happen to know that the woods are full of Indians, thirsting for blood?"

"It's joking ye ar', Master Warren. Didn't I see the laugh in the eye av ye? Injins? To the devil wid Injins! Phat do I care for Injins?"

"You do not believe me. Ask this gentleman," said Chumplin.

Con turned toward the hunter, and while they are staring at one another let me describe the new-comer. A single glance is enough to discern his nationality. An Irishman, boyl and breeches. An unpolished son of old Erin, who had not long left the "gem av the say." He was well built, with a rollicking, devil-may-care expression in his jolly blue eye which was a pleasant thing to see. His hair was nearly white, and not attended to with that care which gentlemen think necessary. In clothing Con showed a disregard for the usages of society. He dressed himself in a pair of tight corduroy smalls, with large brass buckles at the knees, and a pair of stockings which, if they had not seen better days, certainly deserved to do so. His feet were encased in a pair of heavy iron-shod brogans, which were a load in themselves. He had on an embroidered skirt front, the gift of some officer at the garrison, and a long-waited red-velvet vest or waistcoat, which he wore with indifferent grace. His coat was of fustian, and evidently had weathered the sun and rain of many a season. His shock of light hair was surmounted by a ratty caubeen stuck upon one side of his head in a jaunty manner, completing his costume.

Embellished by a short pipe stuck in the corner of his mouth, Con would have been a study for a painter, in time of peace. But he was armed for war; and his weapons were as various as the articles of his costume. A piece of rope was tied about his waist for a belt, and in this was a perfect armory of weapons of different kinds. A pistol without a flint in the lock, a rusty knife without a sheath, a sword which had lost about six inches of the point, a hatchet, with an edge like a cross-cut saw.

"Mebbe ye'll know me ag'in the time ye see me ag'in, mister," he said, taking umbrage at the gaze of the hunter. "Look. I'll pick a bit av a kippin off the thre an' let the head av ye, af ye look so bold at me."

"What a capital subject you will make for a scalping operation," said the hunter. "I think, by a moderately close calculation, that you may go two hundred yards farther without losing your scalp. Certainly not three."

"Ye seem to know more about it than myself does," said Con. "Now look. I'm an Irishman born an' bred. I kom from county Antrim. I can bate the head av any man, big or little, ould or young, gentleman or servant, that speaks the word's til me. D'ye mind that, now?"

"Don't get in a passion, my man. Who is this fellow, Warren?"

"He was my companion in my missions, generally. I will question him. See that you tell me the truth, Con. I want you to tell me why you came here."

"To find you, sure," said Con.

"What did you want with me?"

"I'll tell ye the thruth. Whin ye wint away, I was will to go wid ye, d'ye know? It w'u'dn't make any diff'rence; ye w'u'dn't have me. I'd promised a young lass to s'ell ther ye, an' how w'u'd I do that same aff I was in wan? I can' you in anudder."

"A young lady? What young lady?"

"What young lass c'ld it be but wan, an' that wan Miss Dora. Sure, she said til me, 'Con, my dear, ye know ther Master Warren is a brith av a big, fat fellow, that gets himself into trouble unless some wan is ready to help him?'"

" You ridiculous blackhead! Do you think to make me believe that the young lady said that?"

" Mebbe she didn't make use av them very words, but that was what she meant. So I said I'd see about it. But look til it: whin I was was just making up my mind I w'u'dn't have any thing to do, no more nor to see that he didn't break his neck off a horse, he cuts off intil the wuds."

" And you followed. What an idiot you are, Cen. If I had not stopped last night with this gentleman, you would be at the bottom of the Cohoes falls now. What put it in your head to cross in that way?"

" Sure, I found that nasty little boat upon the bank, an' I thought it w'u'd be a fine thing to cross over in. So I pushed her intil the water an' stepped in, as an honest man shu'd. Whooh! Away she went, bottom upwards, an' there was me twenty feet away in the river, an' near lost me pipe! Well, I kem back, an' turned over the contrary baste, an' tipped the water out an' thried her ag'in. I had no more nor pit my fat in it, whin away I went ag'in, cursin' all such boats til the devil. Then I says to her, ' Ba'll 'cess til ye, for a contrary baste. If ye like to ride wil the bottom up, sure I'll straddle ye.' An' I did."

" That is the last way of riding a canoe I ever heard of. Now that you are here I don't intend to be troubleful with you. So climb into the canoe and go back."

" Pheat! W'u'd ye have me thry to ride in that baste av a thin, ag'in? Now I never thought ye to be hard-hearted before. Don't drive me back, masher. I'd rather stay wil ye. Sure there's as much danger an' mere in goin' back alone than to stay wil ye. Let me go on. I'll do the best by ye I can. Speak wil him, av ye p'ase, masher Hunter. Tell him not to turn away honest Con O'Hara, who loves him dear, but to take him wil him, an' tache him what to do."

" I am afraid you can not do better," said the Hunter. " The fellow is here and we must make the best of it. He is green in the ways of the world, but we will teach him something."

" Thank ye, kindly, masher," said Con. " Don't Larbor up what I said about the kippin."

" What is a kippin?" said Warren.

"A bit av a sthick," replied the Irishman. "Ah, that a nice dog. Sure I know the breed."

"What is it?" said the hunter. "If you can tell me that I shall think better of you."

"No wan can fool me wid a dog. He's got good blood bot' ways. He's just a cross betune the bloodhound av Spain an' the grayhound av ould Engknd. No better blood in the country."

"You are right, my man," said the hunter. "You must make up your mind to keep him, Warren."

"Just as you say. But look here, Master Con. Don't you— By the way, ah—what did you mean by what you said about Dora?"

"That I said was thtrue, only so far as the very woruds she spake, which I disremember. But she did tell me to take care of you."

"Does she think me a boy?" he said. "But I ought not to be angry with her for caring for me. I have given her reason. Was she well when you left?"

"As I only left about an hour after yerself, sure I don't think she change^t much. How cu'd she look but well, the little beauty! Wid her eyes as black as coa's, just sparklin' wid the tears in 'em thinkin' av yerself in danger; an' her lips as red as cherries; an' her figure so nate an' gintale, sure it's the mercy av the Vargin if some av the officers don't marry her before ye git back."

"Nonsense. She would not have any of them."

"Did ye iver hear the song av Major Jeems?" said Con, slyly.

"Never."

"It was like this," said Con. And without prelude he broke out into a merry song:

"Major Jeems was to be married,
All upon a summer day;
All the wedding-guests were carried,
An' himself was on the way.

"Major Jeems he walked in proudly,
Dressed in uniform so nate;
And he called out, bould and loudly,
'I have come my bride to mate.'

"But her chamber had a winder,
An' a ladder til the ground;
When the bridesmaids kem to find her,
Not a trace av her they found.

"But a note was on the table,
An' these words she wrote in glee:
'Let him marry, if he's able,
He is not the man for me.'"

"You impudent scoundrel," roared the young agent. "You meant that for me."

"Thim the coat fits, let thim put it on," said Con. "There's a many young chaps in Schenectady that likes Miss Dora. It's no tin to one ye get her at last."

"I will bid you good-by here," said the hunter, breaking in on the speech of the Irishman. "You can not miss your way now. If you like to see me when you come into this section, you will know where to find me."

"But you have given me no name by which to know you."

"One name is as good as another. Call me Peter Meigs, the Hunter of the Mohawk; that will bring me. It is time you were on the way. Don't forget me. No fear of that Irishman forgetting; he don't like me, I see."

"The devil wid ye," muttered Con. "Ye want to scare me wid yer stories av Indians, don't ye? I'm not aisy scared!"

The hunter smiled and pressed the hand of his young friend warmly. They left Lim standing upon the bank of the stream, his dog at his feet, while they pursued their course beside the silent river.

For two days they kept on their way, stopping now and then for rest and food, until the young man knew by certain signs that they were approaching the place where they had appointed the meeting with the Indian chief. The smaller river soon lay before them, and pushing aside the branches, they came out into the junction.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONFERENCE.

THE spot upon which they emerged was one of those quiet nooks seen along the Mohawk, at various points. At this place Canada creek joins the Mohawk, leaving a beautiful level green, shadowed by tall trees. The Irishman threw himself at length upon the sward, kicking up his heels with a delighted yell.

"Arrah, musha, mether dear, but isn't it a beautiful counthry after all? To the devil wi' Injins! If we c'd only put the bl'r'gards in a gun, an' fire them off, what a fine time we c'u'd have thin. Land in plinty, fish out of all raze, plinty av game. But the red maggus—the haythen, scalyin' savages!"

"It is too bad to see such a country in the hands of men who do not know how to appreciate it," said Warren. "But make less noise. Some of the gentlemen you are liable to in such a high key may be hiding in yonder bushes at this moment."

Con started up in hot haste and began to peer about him suspiciously.

"Ye don't mane it, sure," he said. "Thin all I kin say is, let them look out for themselves. No nonsense now, ye bastes. Look out, ye dithy devils. Kem out an' face me like a man, av ye want any thing. Whoop, whoo! I'm the b'y that ain't afraid. Poke out yer ugly muzz. Don't waste time, ye baste. Show the ugly face av ye, an' I'll show ye what a man from County Antrim can do with a child. Ach, will ye, murther, an' why wuld ye die? I'm ready!"

As if in answer to his call, the bushes parted and an Indian came out into the open space. Con uttered a yell of terror and turned to the left. But Warren had a clutching hand upon his arm, and pulled him back.

"Is this your boasted courage?" he said. "If you faint at the sight of the first Indian, what will you do when you

hear a hundred howling through the woods?—and you will hear them before the day is over."

"But look at him, master dear. Did ye iver see the like? The red baste longs for blood; I can see that in the oi av Lim. I'd like to hit him in the oi."

"Be silent, Con. This is the man I have come out here to meet."

Con shook his head in a dubious manner and gazed angrily at the advancing Indian—a tall, saturnine individual, with a nose hooked like the beak of an eagle. His dress proclaimed him a chief of the Mohawk nation, and he moved with the high and haughty look of a lord of the soil. No man was better known or more feared than Red Wing, chief of the east branch of the Mohawk nation. He held a grudge against the English, as the nearest white men, and as such most likely to encroach upon the lands of the Mohawks. His acut^e mind had foreseen that a treaty between the Mohawks and their more distant neighbors, the French, would be fraught with greater advantages to the Indians than any they could make with the English. He distrusted his race, knowing that they could not stand up against the enervating vices of the white men, especially the vice of strong drink. But he was averse enough to treat with both parties, and see from whence the greatest advantages might spring. Although he had already made up his mind, with true Indian cunning he kept up the guise of friendship to the last moment.

The chief was heavily armed. A buckskin belt was strapped about his waist, in which were fastened two heavy hatchets, in the use of which weapon he was an adept, and a hunting-knife of great length. In his hand he carried a beautiful gun of the most approved make of the period. Warren was not slow in perceiving that the weapon was of French manufacture. Nothing but the rifle which Red Wing had in the p^ree would have allowed him to comprise him off by shooting it with him to this meeting. But he never allowed his gun to leave him when upon any of his expeditions. He conjectured, though he did not know it at the p^ree, that when he said that no one except Warren, whom he knew very well, and the Irishman, whom he had seen at Schenectady, was present, he allude^d with what he intended for a winding

smile upon his savage face, extending his hand, as he had seen the white men do.

"How do, brudder?" he said, in very bad English. "Glad to see you. Hope you pretty well."

Warren replied by a suitable salutation, speaking in the Mohawk tongue, with which he had become familiar in his character as an Indian agent, in which capacity he had acted for several years. The face of the Indian brightened perceptibly, while that of Con elongated in a sudden and comical manner. The Irishman was gifted with a bump of curiosity largely developed, and he wanted to hear the conversation. But, unfortunately for his aspirations, he did not know a word of the language.

"The devil fly away wid ye, thin. Phy can't ye speake a dacent tongue?"

"My brother," said Red Wing, "let us sit on the log. Then we can talk."

They sat down side by side, each nursing in his heart a secret distrust of the other, and ready to take advantage of any slip he might make in his diplomacy. The keen eyes of the Indian glittered like stars.

"Look out for him, Master Warren," whispered Con. "I don't like the look av his oi, I promise ye. Now look at me, ye red neygur," continued he, slacking his fist under the nose of Red Wing. "Don't ye thry to fool him. Av ye do, av ye so much as raise yer hand, I'll give ye a paste in the jaw that will knock ye intil the river, so I will."

"Ugh," said Red Wing, laying his hand on a hatchet in a threatening manner. "Me kill you!"

Con still made hostile demonstrations. Warren spoke to him sternly, and ordered him not to interfere again, in a way which he knew it would not be safe to disobey. But like *his* "oi"—as he termed his own of vision—fixed on the Indian, ready to spring forward at the first sign of treachery.

"I'm watching ye, black baste that ye are," he growled. "Take care av ye!"

"What has my brother to say to the Mohawks?" said the chief. "All about me I see signs which tell me that the Indian is passing away. A man is dead this day. I found him in the forest, and upon his breast I found this."

To Warren's surprise, he produced the very placard which had lain upon the breast of the warrior they had found dead in the woods the morning when he left the hunter's home.

"Does my brother see this?" he cried, in an angry tone. "It is written in blood. It is the blood of Wetumka, who was one of the strong men of the tribe. All the maidens were glad when he went forth to battle, for they knew that he would bring home many scalps. His foot will press the turf no more. He is dead. Who killed him?"

"How should I know?" said Warren, who did not think proper to tell him that he had seen the dead savage. "Some enemy has done this."

"It is a white man's work," replied Red Wing. "Close beside the body I saw the footsteps of men, and one of them did not wear moccasins. It was the mark of a man who wore such covering on his feet as my brother wears."

"Do you think I killed him?" cried Warren, angrily. "I do not come to you with a lie in my mouth. I am not a fool. If Wetumka is dead, he was killed by an enemy."

"I know my brother is not the one who killed Wetumka," replied Red Wing. "If I thought you did it, do you think I would suffer you to live? Red Wing knows how to avenge a friend. Wetumka has slept with him in the same blanket, they have gone out together on the war-path and taken scalps. They will walk the woods no more together. I know this sign. It is the mark of a bad spirit who walks the woods, in the shape of a white man. It is the Car-a-men-ctou, the Spirit of Death. It walks and kills, and leaves this mark upon the bodies of the slain."

Warren, in his experience among the Indians, had heard of the Car-a-men-ctou. The Indians dropped their voices when they spoke of this terrible avenger. For years they had been in the habit of finding bodies of Moawks or Hurons in the woods, with the diamond-shaped mark, and the letter "L. H." written on the chestnut, even with a knife-point upon the forehead of the dead. It was the most known at that time as the "Devil's Paw," the "L. H. Hunter," and it was the Indian name the "Spirit of Death." It was plain that Red Wing feared him above all things, and did not know what he was or whence he came.

"As long as you do not accuse me," said Warren, "I do not mind. I have heard of the 'Spirit of Death,' but I know no more of his origin, or why he slays the Mohawks, than you do. I have seen evidences of his work, but that has nothing to do with us."

"Why was the bootmark by the body of Wetumka?" said Red Wing. "Why did they leave it to rot under the summer sky? They did not give it a grave. The Spirit never buries its dead. It leaves them where the summer rays fall thickest, and the carrion crow comes down to feed upon them. I will meet the Spirit, yet, and prove that I fear it not. I am Red Wing, the Eagle of the Mohawk. I have no fear."

The Indian smote his breast and sat erect upon the log, in a vainglorious manner, peculiar to most Indians. But in his case it was backed up by real bravery, and Warren knew that the bravado spirit must be humored.

"My brother has a beautiful gun," he said, laying his hand upon the weapon; "will the chief let me look at it?"

Red Wing would willingly have refused, but he had no reason for doing so, and suffered the piece to pass out of his hand reluctantly enough. Warren looked it over, tried the spring, examined the make of the barrel, and, without scrupling to do so, noted the "*four de lis*" upon the silver plate upon the stock, and the initials, "L. D.". This was all he needed to satisfy him that the piece was of French origin.

"My brother likes the gun," said Red Wing. "A chief should always go well armed. Red Wing could not live without a good gun."

"The French make good guns," replied Warren, coolly; "I always knew that."

"How does my brother know it is a French gun?" said the chief, rather angrily. "He talks too much. Why should not Red Wing have a French gun, if it is a good one, and use it in battle?"

"No man in the world will tell me that," replied Warren. "Let the chief look upon the blade and" said he, taking it from his belt. "That is a French weapon. I took it from a man near Ticonderoga. It does not follow because I have that weapon that I am a Frenchman, or in the pay of France.

Let us speak to the point. I have heard that the French have dug up the hatchet."

"A little bird has whispered the same in the ear of Red Wing," replied the Indian, who was determined not to make the first proposal.

"The Mohawks will not be idle when scalps are to be taken," said Warren. "I have called my brother to a talk because I know that he will be eager to take the field, and we will want weapons to fight the enemy."

"The Mohawks are ready to fight. But, they want guns. They can not fight without them."

"That is true. Our father at Albany is willing to give guns into the hands of his friends, but not to his enemies. Some one has whispered in his ear that the Mohawks are sitting on a log, and do not know which way to jump. On one side are the French, who promise much if the Indians will fight for them; on the other side the English, who promise more if they will take up the hatchet on their side."

"Many promises, little ghee," said Red Wing, in a sententious manner.

Warren could not refrain from smiling at the witty answer.

He knew that it was true. The English leaders were full of promises to the Indians, but these promises were rarely kept, and it was this fact, more than any thing else, which induced the Mohawks to incline to the side of the French, who always kept their promises to the letter.

"Look," said Red Wing. "A white chief came to me at the council-table. 'You shall have guns, you shall have knives, you shall have hatchets at such a place, such a day,' he says. The Indians go to the place and wait for they get? A basket that will never end, a knife that is in the hand, a gun which will never load, powder which will not burn. It is not so. Let the Yonahs be just to their word."

"They have done the Mohawks wrong, and the Indians know them," said Warren.

"So, so," said Red Wing. "All this is not good. It is not good for the market, the people and the

ball, and we will make a treaty with him at the council-fire."

"My Brother must promise first to fight against the French," said Warren.

"What if I speak the promise and keep it no better than the Yengees kept theirs?" said the chief. "Promises are no good. Do, do! Then let them give us what we ask, and we will believe them our friends."

"I hope you do not think we are fools enough to put arms in your hands when we know that you are as likely to use them against us as for us," replied Warren. "I have no power to give you the weapons. Make a treaty with us, and then you shall have the guns."

"No good," replied the Indian. "Must have guns first. You give us these and we will be friends. The Mohawks do not know who to trust. The white men press them more and more out of their hunting-grounds and back into the woods. White men's wigwams grow thick along the river everywhere. It is not good. In a little time, where will the Indian country be? Hendricks is a fool. He can not see that the white men are driving the Mohawks out of their country, away from the springs where they have so often drunk. My fathers were buried yonder, and I am here. White men's feet have trod upon the graves, and I can do nothing."

"The English are the friends of the Mohawks," said Warren, interposing.

"So the Yengees were the friends of the Pocumtucks, the Wampanoags, and the Narragansetts. But where are they now? The Nipmucks were a great tribe, though enemies to the Mohawks. But where is the tribe? No shoot of the ancient stem remains. The Potowatamies numbered ten thousand bowmen. They can not now bring thirty men into the field. That is the friendship of the Yengees."

"Then I am to understand that you have joined the French?" said Warren, rising in anger.

"Still, brother," replied the Indian. "Let us talk longer. I have not said the Mohawks have joined the French. But the French make promises and keep them better than the Yengees."

"Is that the way you received your gun?" said Warren.

"It is a good gun," answered the chief, evading the question. "Well, let my brother speak. Will he send us the muskets, the powder and ball? We want hatchets, too, and long knives. Shall we have them?"

"Not until after the treaty," replied Warren.

"Let my brother take time to think," said Red Wing. "It is not a light thing to make the Mohawks angry. They want these things badly. They must have them somewhere. Do not speak all at once."

"You have heard my answer," was the only reply vouchsafed by the young Indian agent. "I can say no more."

The eyes of the chief began to flash. He had come out with the fixed purpose of getting the guns, solely to turn them against the givers. He had depended upon overreaching the young agent and making the English provide the guns for their own destruction. But, he found Warren ready for him at every point, and that he could not get the weapons without a treaty.

"No good," he said. "One shall give these guns; if not the Yengees, then the French."

"Let us quit, before there is bad blood between us, Red Wing. I know you. Do not think to blind me. You are not cunning enough for that."

Red Wing laid his hand upon a weapon. This was the opportunity Con had been waiting for. He had been standing nearby, with a thick stick in his hand, watching the Indian, and when he seized the hatchet he made a sudden bound, and flourishing the shillalah over his head, brought it down upon the feathered head-dress of the savage, accompanying the action with a wild Irish shout. Red Wing fell to the earth, and over him stood Con O'Hara brandishing his weapon and pealing forth that startling cry. Warren dragged him away. But the work was done. Henceforth they could only expect the enmity of Red Wing. And Warren knew him too well not to be certain that he had allies not far away.

CHAPTER V.

AT BAY.

"RUN, now, Con. You have destroyed us both," shouted the young man. "Follow me, and I will try to save you. Don't dally."

Without saying more he turned upon his heel, and darted away at his best speed, closely followed by Con, who was secretly exulting over the good blow he had dealt the Indian, and who, after all, had an Irishman's contempt of danger which he could not see. Away they went down the Mohawk, never pausing to draw breath, satisfied that nothing could save them except putting a good distance between themselves and the foes whom Warren was certain the wood's contained. His opinion was soon confirmed, for they heard a whoop from the direction of the spot where they had left Red Wing, which was answered from a dozen throats coming from various points in the forest. Con began to wish that he had not been quite so free with his weapon, as he was in for it, and nothing remained but to save themselves if they could.

"Whoop! Hark til the bla'g'ards," he muttered, as he ran. "Sure I thought there was only wan man."

"More likely a hundred," replied Warren. "Save your breath. You will need it before long."

Con became suddenly silent and followed his leader in a steady, dogged way peculiar to a good runner. This was not the first time Warren Champlin had been in danger from Indians, but he had in other cases been uninnumbered. And though Con had brought him into this peril, he could not let it in his heart to desert him. They ran for life, but Con was satisfied by the sounds they heard, that the Mohawks were in close pursuit. The pace at which they were going was telling upon them, and Warren slackened his speed, thinking over every expedient to throw the pursuers off the scent. He knew them well. The Indian is at home in following a trail,

especially one which the pursued have no time to conceal. Warren had seen them before now following a blind trail on a run, so great is their quickness of vision. Every tent leaf, every broken twig is so much of a printed page for them to read. And Con O'Hara's great feet left heavy marks upon the turf, which a child might have followed.

As he ran on more slowly, Warren stumbled over something in the path and started back, while Con uttered a cry of surprise not unmixed with terror. An Indian lay dead upon the sod, who bore upon his forehead the bloody mark of the Life-Hunter, the diamond, inclosing the letters "L. H." The destroyer of the Mohawks had been in the way, and left his work behind! But they had no time to pause, except to note that the dead man was as villainous a looking scoundrel as could be found in the country, and that his leggins were fringed with human hair. Even the slight pause they made gave the pursuers a chance to come nearer, so near indeed that they could even hear the footsteps as they darted away. Warren had loaded his pistols and rifle in the morning, and he took the the smaller weapons out as he ran, and saw that they were in order, loosened his knife in his belt, and in other ways prepared himself for battle. Con flourished his stick and did not show any signs of fear. They were approaching the river, which at this point took a curve, running between high banks. As they ran up the bluff they heard a sound, which, though familiar to Warren, curdled the blood in the veins of Con, and even gave the young agent a thrill.

It was a long, shrill, tremulous wail, the death-cry uttered by the Indians over the body of a dead friend. Warren knew that they had found the body in the path, and that they would know it was the work of the man they so feared, the Car-a-men-ctou—Spirit of Death. Would it make them pause?

He was not long in doubt, for he heard the voice of Red Wing call to them to come on, and knew by the sound's like that the enemy were between them and the course they best fit to take. There was nothing for it now but to cross the prairie and, and fight for their lives. They hurried up the slope. At this point the limestone rocks were piled high on every side, leaving only a narrow passage. Up this path

they went, and found themselves upon a level rock, which formed in front a sort of rampart, raised some feet above the general level, and commanding the open space which their foes must pass.

"Masther, dear," said Con, "it's me that brought this danger on ye. I'll do all I can to save ye. Be sure av that."

"I don't doubt you, Con," replied Warren. "You did not know any better. The mistake was in bringing you here at all. I ought to have left you behind, and picked you up on my return. It only remains for us to fight. But, you have no weapons."

"Sure an' I have the gun."

"A fusee with a flintless lock," said Champlin. "It would hardly be of service. I think they are coming."

"To be sure they are," said Con. "There; don't ye see the baste?"

Warren raised his rifle and fired at an Indian who had inadvertently exposed himself in his haste to get ahead of his companions. The young agent was a capital shot and might really have killed his enemy, but he knew that a wounded man makes more trouble and strikes more terror into an attacking force, than a dead man can possibly do. The bullet, well-aimed, was driven through the thigh of the savage, bringing him to the ground, uttering cries of rage and agony, which brought the others to a halt, and gave Warren time to reload.

"Let me give you a lesson, Con," said he, coolly. "I might have killed that fellow easily enough, but his yells will scare them more. I shot him in that way on purpose."

"Yis," said Con. "Sure an' he won't be any trouble til us. Say, masther: who killed the Injin we saw in the path?"

"The Life-Hunter, whoever he may be. It is some mysterious man who haunts these woods and who hates the M-hawks. I was speaking to Red Wing of him this morning. Some call him Red Slayer."

"Mach good w'u'd that do me, whin ye spoke in the Laythen tongue," grumbled Con. "No masther. He's a tig' lad, anyhow, an' may good luck pad his pillow, er of aye

man that has the good sinse to hate an Injin. I hope ye hate them too, masther."

"I have no special love for them," said Warren. "Can you swim? No, of course you can't, or you would have saved yourself this morning. If you could, I think we would get out of this. That Indian is getting too forward. I must teach him a lesson."

A savage was creeping across the open space, screening himself as well as he could behind the trees and rocks scattered over it loosely, with the intention of drawing the wounded man out of reach, for he was rolling about on the sward, groaning and shouting in the most ridiculous manner. In spite of his caution, he would show part of his body now and then. Warren laid his rifle across a rock, kneeled down and waited patiently. His time came soon. The savage raised his back high enough so that his broad shoulders were in view. At that moment the rifle cracked, and the bullet traversed the length of his spine, cutting a furrow in the flesh half an inch deep, without inflicting what might be called a dangerous wound. If the bullet had passed through his body he could not have dropped more quickly than he did. His cries were now added to those of his companion, and several Mohawks who were creeping up slowly retreated in hot haste, leaving their companions floundering on the sod. This rout of the enemy was too much for Con, and he uttered his Irish battle-cry, and leaped upon the rock, whirling his stick on high.

The movement was very near fatal to him. Although very few Indians at this time were good rifle shots, Red Wing was one of the few. He brought his rifle to his shoulder and fired. At the same moment Warren, aware of his companion's danger, drew him suddenly down, and the bullet cut through the air directly in the line of the spot where his body had been the moment before.

"Look out for yourself," said Warren. "Red Wing is a dead shot, and has the best gun in this part of the country."

"I'll not do it ag'in," said Con. "Thank ye, masther. All ye had not pulled me down, I does be thinkin' I'd be a dead man now. I think that will scare them. They won't try it ag'in soon."

"Yes they will," said Warren, gloomily. "If it were any

one but Red Wing I should have some hope. But, the fellow actually knows something about fighting, an' I is as brave as a lion. They will make an attack upon us soon, with all their force. When it comes to that, take the hatchet an' sell your life as dearly as you can. Never let them take you!"

"Phy not?" queried Con.

"Don't you know that they would surely burn you at the stake, after the death of so many of their comrades lately? They will visit the deaths of those who were killed by the Life-Hunter upon us."

"That ain't fair," said Con. "They will have enough to visit on us widout that, sure. Av they take me widout a fight, thin I don't know meself at all, an' me father was old Con O'Hara from county Antrim. Whooh! D'ye think I'm afear'd av the likes av them? It's whin they drive me inti a corner I ain't afear'd. There's mither. Shoot him, masher!"

Warren raised his rifle, but the Indian against whom it was directed saw the movement, and having a fear of the gun-dealing weapon, prudently got out of reach. Warren withdrew the piece with a laugh.

"That man will not give us any great trouble," said he. "I've scared him, at any rate."

"That is good. Arrah, av I only had me gun, sure I'd make them fly."

"You would, I have no doubt," said the other, laughing.

"Look out, masher," said the Irishman. "I'm thinkin' they mane business now."

A terrible series of yells sounded through the forest fire, the throats of fifty men, and Warren knew enough of Indian ways to be sure that it was meant as a cover for some sudden movement. Here and there those who were on the watch would dart out, flourish their weapons, and rush back again into the woods. Warren knew better than to waste his fire upon these too demonstrative foes. He felt certain that the danger must come from another quarter, and having Con to keep an eye upon these dancing jacks, he raised his eyes quickly along the line of the woods, for a solution of the mystery. As he did so, he saw a form which he recognized as that of Red Wing, dart suddenly across the open space to reach a

bluff above him, some hundred yards away. So quick was his movement that Warren had just time to jerk his rifle to his shoulder and fire, as the savage plunged behind the rock. Something in the long leap he took just at the moment, convinced the young man that he must have barked him.

"That means mischief," he said. "Keep an eye on our good friends in front, Con. I am satisfied that our chief danger just at present is from Red Wing. He has taken his rifle with him."

Ten minutes passed and the tumult in front continued, evidently with the design of drawing his attention. Few of the Indians had firearms, for Red Wing had told the truth when he said that the weapons furnished their allies by the English were not of the best description. There was little to fear from them unless they came to close quarters. As Warren looked about him, a bullet struck the cap from his head. From the position in which he stood, the shot could not have come from the front, for it had a downward course when it struck the cap. Warren's quick eye detected a puff of white smoke rising slowly from the crag toward which he saw Red Wing run, and which commanded the place where they stood. He saw his danger now. Red Wing had gained this commanding point, and from it was endeavoring to pick them off one at a time. He would be very likely to succeed unless something could be done to stop him.

"What's that?" said Con. "Och, may the saint's pit him in purgatory all his natural life, the black-hearted baste that he is. Sure he'll shoot us bot' ay we don't take care."

"Get behind that projection," said Warren, pointing to a place where Con would be sheltered from the weapon of Red Wing. "I will attend to this fellow. He must show himself in order to get a shot at me."

"Truth, an' that's three for ye," said Con, ensconcing himself behind the rocks. "Them chaps in front are beginning to come up. I'll drive them back, mesill."

Warren saw that Con had the oil flask in his hand, but did not know what he would try to do any thing with that wonderful weapon. Leaving the Irishman to take care of himself, he kept his gaze fixed upon the crag from which the shot had come. Once he saw the feathered head-dress of the chief

rise above the rock, but certain indications made him think that the head of Red Wing was not in it, and that it was merely raised to draw his fire. It was some time before Red Wing would give up this ruse, but when he saw that it was unsuccessful, he began to crawl about for a place from which he could fire without showing himself. But he found it impossible. His enemy was on the alert, and Red Wing had received personal demonstration that he was good at a quick sight; for the bullet which Warren had fired at him had raised a welt along his back like the stroke of a riding-whip, which gave him great pain, and made him the more eager to injure the young man. It was simply a question of time. If the Indian got impatient, and showed himself, they must exchange shots.' He did not care to do that.

Warren had laid his rifle across the rock, and stood waiting patiently. His intercourse with the Indians had made him almost like them in patient endurance, and he shewed no signs of anger because the Indian did not show himself. The distance was not so great that he could not make himself heard, and he sent a shout of derision across the space at the savage lying in wait for him.

"Dog of a Mohawk," he shouted in their language, "the Mohawk girls will laugh when you go back to them, and say you are beaten by two men. I thought the Mohawks were led by a man; it seems he is only a coward."

"Big talk," said Red Wing, in the same tone. "I am a great chief. Many warriors have fallen by my hand. Their scalps hang in my lodge."

"Fool! Do you know that the Life-Hunter is abroad? Did you see the Mohawk with the mark on his forehead? He looks for you next."

"He is a dog," replied the chief. "Let the Spirit of the rocks and trees carry my words to the Spirit of Death, and let him meet Red Wing if he dares. A chief is not afraid."

"The dog can bark at the hunter who is coming," said Warren, "but when he is near, he puts his tail between his legs and sneaks away. Red Wing is a coward. He has many braves and they are afraid of two men. Go; you are a fool. The Mohawks will spit at you when you return, and drive you out of the village like a dog."

"Let the white man look to himself. Red Wing is *not* a fool, to put himself within reach of his rifle."

"Take that, ye devils!" shouted Con, at this moment. The words were accompanied by a tremendous explosion as of a small piece of artillery, and Con came rolling down upon the rock below. He had been employed during the conversation between the young man and the chief in putting a load into the old fassée, and pricking some powder into the tube. He had just completed the work, and then, with his pocket-flint and steel, lighted a small fire upon the rock, by means of dry leaves and sticks which he picked up. The Indians in front were coming closer, and when he thought his time had come he applied a brand to the priming. He had put a very heavy load into the weapon, including a handful of small shot which he had in his pocket. The effect was tremendous. Down went Con from his perch, while the Indians rose and ran for their lives, each one being confident that he must be the only one left alive after that fearful discharge. When Con started up and gained his position again, not an enemy was in sight; neither could he see any of the dead whom he felt confident must be left. The sound drew Warren's attention for a moment and the chief improved the time.

Breaking suddenly from his covert he leveled his rifle and took deliberate aim. Warren was at that moment engrossed in watching the antics of the Irishman and forgot his danger. Just as Red Wing pulled the trigger, another rifle boomed and his arm dropped powerless to his side. Whoever had fired the shot was a finished marksman, and calculated his time well. The ball struck the Indian while in the act of pulling the trigger, and Red Wing's bullet flew wide of the mark. Warren turned, and saw the rifle dashed from his enemy's hand, as he leaped behind the rock which had sheltered him up to this time, while the puff of smoke, rising from the cover on the other side of the stream, announced the spot where his unknown friend lay hidden from view. Warren uttered a shout which rang across the river and it was answered from the other side of the stream.

"We have a friend in ambush yonder," said Warren. "He has saved my life. You will be the death of me yet, Con. What was all that row about?"

"Sure I fired off me short gun," said Con, with conscious pride. "Who have a better right? I got me off on the red devils crappin' up yonder, an' give them a blast. Ye ought to seen them put out. They won't want any more av me, d'y'e mind?"

"I hope not, if you make as much fuss over it as that. Don't do it again. You routed them, however. No decently constituted Indian could stand a broad-side like that. I wonder who our unknown friend can be?"

"Don't ye see somethin' wavin' yonder, master? Just beyant the big bush, I mane."

Warren looked in the direction indicated and distinctly saw a hand emerge from the bushes and wave something white toward them.

"That is our unknown friend," said Warren. "Attend to the Indians, Con. Here; take my gun. It is loaded. If you see an Indian blaze away at him. It don't make much difference whether you hit him or not, so long as y'a scare him. I must attend to our friend."

Warren watched the other bank, keenly. In a moment he saw something coming down with the eddy, which swept it in toward the shore. It was a green bough, torn from a tree. Warren let himself down to the water's edge and managed to seize it as the current swept it along. A piece of bark was attached to it. He took the bark off and found some words written upon the inside. He read them:

"I will send down the canoe in the same way. Stay where you are. Let the next clump of bushes pass you. Seize the second."

Warren waved his hand to signify that he understood, and waited. The next bush was larger, and having been by the rapid stream, got into the eddy and came toward the shore, some yards below him. The last clump was larger yet, and was launched from a spot some yards farther up the stream. It came slowly down, was caught by the eddy as before, and drawn in toward the point upon which Warren stood. He seized it eagerly and drew it up to the bank. Under the shroud of bushes he found the very canoe upon which Con had figured when they first saw him.

Securing the canoe he ran up the bank just as Con fired his weapon, crying out:

"Take that, wid me blessing."

Con had seen the savages approaching the rocks, and acting upon his orders to fire without regard to results, had shut both eyes and fired in the air. The Indians who had been roused to desperation by the wound their chief had received, paid no attention to the shot, but kept on their course toward the rocks.

"Go down and get into the canoe," said Warren. "I will follow you."

"To the devil wid a canoe," roared Con. "Let's stay an' fight them."

"Stay here and be scalped!" cried Warren, angrily. "I have no time to dally. Give me that gun."

He snatched the weapon from the hand of the Irishman, and catching him by the collar, dropped him over the bank, following as quickly as he could. He made him lie down in the bottom of the frail craft, assuring him that the least motion on his part would overturn her. Con's dread of the Indians was not so great as to overcome his fear of the water, and it was only by absolute violence that Warren got him into the canoe. This done, he stood up in the stern, and seizing the paddle, pushed out into the stream. A wild shout greeted his appearance, for the Indians had not dreamed of the presence of a canoe. They rose from their covert in hot haste and ran toward the stream, those of them having muskets discharging them at the figure which stood in the stern of the canoe. The paddle flashed and the light craft dashed through the water, while bullet after bullet hissed in the river beside them. Con was in an ecstasy of fear.

"Aisy, Master Warren, ais y, ais y! Don't hurry that way, please. You'll tip the boat over."

"Keep quiet. No fear of my tipping the canoe if you do n't move. We must get to the other shore as soon as we can. 'Tis to let here. Hi! That was a close one."

A bullet had actually grazed his cheek, leaving a livid mark which turned the next moment to a red color. He shook his head, pulled, and bent with renewed energy to his paddle until the Indian, wild with rage, dashed into the water

in pursuit. Some placed their weapons on logs and swam, pushing their log before them. The foremost paid dearly for his temerity. The deadly rifle on the bank spoke, and the savage threw up his arms and sunk without a cry. The others, stricken with terror, turned back as quickly as they had plunged in, leaving Warren to pursue his course in safety. He blessed the hand which had put Red Wing *hors de combat*, for he knew that if the arm of that redoubtable marksman were in condition, he could never have reached the shore alive. As he drew the boat up the bank he just escaped a shot from one Indian better trained than the rest, who had possessed himself of the weapon of Red Wing.

"Get up, Con. Hurry."

"Sure I'm dead," howled Con. "I'm kilt intirely. Who! Phat w'u'd me mither say aff she were to see her b'y, now? Don't talk til me. Where's me stub av a gun?"

"I left it on the rocks."

"Lift it? Lift me gun? Och, then, the sknts be good til us all. We are gone now. Aff I kept me gun, I might have saved ye."

"Silence!" said a stern voice. "Would you destroy us all? Hold your tongue."

Both turned quickly. Peter Meigs stood before them.

CHAPTER VI.

DANTERN.

WARREN advanced quickly and shook hands with the hunter fervently, thanking him for the life he had preserved. Peter said but little. His face looked as it did the morning after he had returned to the cave, just before they found the Indian with the lumber on his breast. It was stern and mournful. The young man could not help believing that this man had been changed by some great sorrow to the worst; and whatever he now was. The dog Peril lay at his feet, looking up at the young man from his red eyes.

"Don't thank me," said the strange man. "They were Indians—you a white man. That is enough for me. But, that Irishman must keep quiet. He will never make a scout with that tongue."

"Now look here, mister," said Con, assuming a belligerent attitude, "who are you, and what are you, to talk that way til a decent lad like me? Now see: you say that ag'in, an' I'll catch ye be the trout an' crow ye intil the river."

"You!" cried Peter. "Clod that you are, beware that you do not anger me. If you do, if you dare to rouse me, be the danger on your own head."

"Sowl av me body, man, but ye look savage now," said Con. "Am I afraid av ye? Sorra bit am I."

"There is no time to quarrel," said Meigs. "You will have an opportunity to keep your words good some day, perhaps."

"I am ashamed of you, Con," said Warren, sternly. "Do you forget an obligation so soon? This gentleman has saved your life twice since you followed me out into the woods, and this is the return you make him."

"Then why w'u'd he spoke that way til me?" whined Con. "Sure an' it's in the nature av an Irishman to talk back. I does be thinkin' he could bite the bones av me mighty nisy, av he was so pleased; but I must have me say."

"You are not yet out of danger," said Meigs. "In my opinion, the worst lies before us. Let us not waste time. It will not be long before the Indians find means to cross the river. Take your rifle and come. Peril, go in front."

The dog had risen during the slight altercation between the hunter and the Irishman, and stood glaring savagely at the latter. Understanding the order, he at once took the path along the river-bank. Meigs followed, after first kicking out the bottom of the canoe, that it might be of no use to their enemies in following them. This done, they started on a run. Where the water was shallow they walked in the stream, for no one knew better than Meigs how to hide a trail. He had lived too long in the forest not to have learned that. They were silent as the grave. Con would have been loquacious, but Meigs turned upon him with a tomahawk in his hand, and he became silent.

"You are worse nor an Injin," said the Irishman; "worse nor any Injin I ever seen. Go til the devil."

After that he remained silent, following Warren in a dogged, angry way, sniffing at the hunter, and wishing him all sorts of bad luck. For three hours they kept on, hearing nothing of their enemy. At length the hunter stopped of his own accord.

"Red Wing has something more important on hand than our capture," he said. "He has left us to ourselves. You may speak if you like, Irishman."

"Small thanks t' ye, thin," said Con. "It's little I care for ye, or the likes av ye."

"You will be more friendly to me some day," said Meigs. "Perhaps I did not give you sufficient credit. You are brave enough, even to rashness; but, you have much to learn before you can make an efficient scout. Our conference must be short. I leave you here. You had better return to Schenectady."

"Why not go with us?" said Warren.

"What have I to do with settlements? They only serve to remind me of— Bat, no matter. No, no; I must leave you. Think of me kindly, for I really wish for your good opinion."

He rose and called to his dog. They watched him until he had buried himself in the forest, the hound following close at his heels. Con looked relieved. In the presence of this man, his green conduct as a scout appeared all the more ridiculous.

"I'm afraid I'll never make a good scout," he said. "I try hard, Masther Warren."

"You will do well in time," said the young man, kindly. "Do not fear. I will teach you."

"That Meigs is a quare man. He knows all about the Injins. An' how he hates them! Wheo!"

"He has good reason. Let us be on the path," said Warren.

He took up his rifle and led the way. Con followed, and no longer restrained by the presence of Meigs, allowed himself to run riot. He told of the wonderful deed he would have done if the Indians had dared to assault them that day.

after they crossed the river, and of the warlike feats he had accomplished in coming up from Schenectady. At nightfall, they found themselves not far from the falls. Warren sought a sheltered nook, and built a small fire. Then he went to the stream, and in a few moments caught a number of fish. Several of them were broiled upon crotched sticks over the blaze. Warren always carried a small box of salt in his haversack, and no meal prepared for the dainty palate of any epicure ever gave him half the pleasure which these men took in their simple repast. Hunger seasons food, however plain. When they had finished, Warren took his rifle, and telling Con to keep quiet, and not put out the fire, he went up the bank to scout a little, as a guard against surprise. As he was casting a searching glance about the horizon in search of smoke, or any thing else which might awaken suspicion, he heard the quick beat of coming hoofs. As he poised his rifle, the rider came into view, and he saw a man whom he recognized from the description which Meigs had given of him. He was certain it could be no other than Captain D'Intern, of the French army, whom he had once seen. There was the beautiful male face, the stalwart form, the smiling lips, and the subtle grace of motion which irresistibly reminded the looker-on of the tiger—treacherous, savage and beautiful. His hair was silky, lustrous and abundant, and curled about his white forehead in little rings, as we see in the statues of Apollo. His black eyes had a cold, hard glitter in them, far from pleasant. He started at seeing the young agent, and laid his hand upon his sword-hilt; but, remembering himself, he laughed lightly and bowed to his saddle-bow, with a grace and ease which set him upon a Frenchman of any creature upon earth.

"I am glad to see you, *mon ami*," he said. "It is not often that we meet a white man in this endless wilderness. *Ma foi*, I have traveled all the way from Albany without seeing a white man's face."

"Then you avoided the settlements, monsieur," said Warren. "There are many white men on the Mohawk."

"So I have heard. But, my dear friend, do you not understand that a Frenchman is unwelcome in an English village, no matter how peaceful his intentions? Probably, if I had kept on through the settlements, I should have been assaulted

by some ignorant woodman, simply because I am a Frenchman. So, making discretion the better part of valor, I turned aside and depended upon my own resources."

Warren knew that he lied, and that he had not been near Albany at all. Indeed, he could not have spent an hour there without being made a prisoner, for there was not a party in, not even excepting Putnam, who was better known than he. A very Nero, he could have fiddled while Rome burned; and, after the destruction of some English settlement, he could sit down among the smoking ruins and eat a hearty meal, not at all discomposed by the bleeding bodies ranged about him on every hand. Warren had hard work to keep his hands from him, but mastered himself by an effort.

"I suppose you are out on a hunt and have halted for the night. I shall be glad of your company if you will allow me to sleep by your fire," he said.

Warren did not know how to refuse, and as he hoped that some good might come of the interview, he agreed to the proposition.

"You had better lead your horse into the thicket and tie him," he said. "There are those in the forest who would be apt to make free with such an animal as that if they had the opportunity. He is a temptation even to me."

"He is a fine animal," said the Frenchman. "A very fine animal. I am proud of him, for he has borne me well for three years. I am nothing without my horse. Allow me to introduce myself. I am a French gentleman of fortune, Merton Le Vert, by name, and I am studying the character of the Iroquois with the intention of putting them in a book."

"Monsieur Le Vert," said Warren, "I am glad to know you. I return the compliment by saying that I am called Warren, and reside in Schenectady."

"Ah, Warren? Monsieur Warren? Charmed, I am sure. That Schenectady is on the river. If I am not misinformed, it is very much exposed to a French attack."

"They certainly have not taken measures to build up strong defenses," said Warren. "The main reason of that is, they depend upon themselves in a great measure. Englishmen are so opinionated, you understand. They think themselves equal to at least three Frenchmen."

"Ah. Do they so? It is a strange thing how the vice of pride runs in a nation's blood. I have been taught that the French are the greatest military nation on earth. Perhaps I may be wrong; doubtless I am. But, it is a part of a Frenchman's education. Here we are at your camp-fire. Your servant, I suppose."

"Yes. Con, attend to this gentleman. Do any thing he bids you."

"Yes, Master Warren," said Con. The eyes of the Frenchman twinkled. The acute fellow saw in a moment that Warren had not given him his full name, and he determined to find out what it was, never suspecting that Champlin knew him. If Warren had given his in full, they would have known each other in a moment, for Champlin's name was well known to the French, and in his capacity as Indian agent he had done them great harm. Con eyed the Frenchman with that feeling of scorn which an Irishman naturally feels for a "monsieur," and rose to get some of the fish which had been left, while Warren rekindled the fire. The Frenchman, assisting him, picked up some wet wood and laid it on the pile. Warren threw it off quickly.

"Excuse me, sir. That will not do. There are Indians in the woods and we want to see as little of them as possible."

"*Pardonnez moi!* I never thought of that. Does this wood make more smoke than the other?"

"Certainly. There is more water in it."

"*Certainement!* What a blockhead I am, to be sure. I am to blame for suffering my discretion to run away with me in that manner. More wet, more smoke. I shall never be a Pariser."

Warren said nothing, but he knew that Dantern had put the wet wood on the fire to direct the Indians to the place where they lay. Con cooked several fish and brought them to the Frenchman on a piece of bark. He ate with the keen appetite of a man who had traveled fast and far. When he had finished, Con cleared away the table by the summary process of throwing the plates into the river, and then lighted a pipe and sat down to smoke.

"I suppose, since you say that the Indians are in the

"woods," said the Frenchman, producing a silver pipe-bowl and screwing it onto an ebony handle, "that it is dangerous to travel?"

"Very much so. I wonder that you dare attempt it," replied Warren.

"It is in fulfillment of a wager. Some friends of mine in Montreal said that I dared not go into the Indian country. I denied the assertion and wagered my money upon it. You see me here."

"How much was the wager?"

"A hundred Louis."

"Then I am to understand you put your life in peril for that amount?"

"What would you have?" said Dantern, with an expressive shrug of the shoulder, which only a Frenchman could imitate. "Honor is a great matter. I had given my word to do it, and it must be done."

"A small value to put upon your life," said Warren. "I set the price of mine higher than that. By the way, you said you were in Albany. Was Amherst there?"

As Dantern had not been in Albany at all, this question was a puzzler. He did not know but it was a trap to catch him and he did not propose to be caught.

"Recollect that I was there *incognito*, and dared not show myself much, for the reason of which I have spoken. I only staid one night in Albany. It is rather a strong town. Is Schenectady as strong?"

"About the same," said Warren. "We depend more upon the number of men in the town than on the walls."

"I did not know it was so strong," said the Frenchman. "With your permission, I will now take rest. I have had a fatiguing day."

They wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay down to rest. Warren did not intend to sleep. He suspected Dantern of treachery and did not mean to be taken unawares. Con was asleep and snoring in less than half an hour. Warren had lain down with his face toward the Frenchman, the blanket shrouding his features. But, he took a sudden look; a portion of the blanket should drop from his eyes, which, though apparently closed, were watchful. An hour passed

on, and the Frenchman did not move. At length he raised his head, slowly at first, and then sat up. Warren lay still, but the eye which was half covered by his arm was open and fixed upon Dideron. The Frenchman fell upon his hands and knees and began to crawl away in a careful manner, until he reached the edge of the thicket. He did not attempt to get his horse, but kept on for half a mile, until he gained the river-bank. Here he began to fumble among the reeds and rushes which grew upon the bank and drew out a canoe, which he pushed out and made for the other shore, as he thought seen by none.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ALLIES IN CRIME.

HE reckoned without his host. Warren had started up, the moment he had entered the thicket, and waking Con, told him to follow him. Con obeyed, and they set out on the track of Dideron. Whatever the Frenchman went, two dark figures glided on behind him. The moon shone brightly. When he took the canoe out of the reed's, they were lying prostrate on the soil, not a hundred feet away. The instant he pushed off, they also came to the shore, and finding a log there, pushed it out into the stream and allowed it to float down, while they clung to it. Warren's only weapons were his pistols—which he had put into his cap—and his knife. He did not think it worth his while to be encumbered with a rifle, and left that weapon in the camp. They landed a few yards below the spot where the canoe had reached the shore, and saw that Dideron was standing up in the boat, peering out into the forest. All at once there broke forth upon the air the cry of the loco, a bird now almost unknown in the regions where its cry was once heard on every hand, upon the trees and bushes. So perfect was the call, that Warren had no doubt what it was, not the cry of the bird he had heard from the throat of the Frenchman. The call was repeated three times, and then he landed the canoe high

and dry upon the bank. While he was doing this the call was answered.

Warren and Con had by this time gained the shore. Con had overcome his dread of the water. Dantern tightened his belt, cast a look toward the shore where he supposed he had left Warren, laughed lightly, and strode off into the woods. The path was lightened by the full moon. Warren, restraining the impetuosity of Con, followed as closely as he could without giving the Frenchman notice of his presence. He had not far to go, or the horse would not have been left behind. When he had gone about a mile he paused and gave the signal-call again. The reply came immediately, and so clear at hand as to startle Con. Dantern sat down upon a log, giving a single sharp whistle to direct the course of the man for whom he waited. Warren began to have hopes of his Irish companion. He had crossed the stream without showing any fear, and had moved with great caution in following the Frenchman. While they were waiting, Dantern hummed a song. Their doubts were soon at rest, for the bushes parted, and Red Wing stepped out. His arm was in a buckskin sling.

"How is this, my brother?" said Dantern. "You are wounded."

"Yes; got ball in arm. You take it out for me. Indian no good."

He took off the sling, bared his muscular arm, and submitted to the rough practice of Dantern. It was rather a ticklish operation to perform by moonlight, but it must be done. Dantern had a knife with a narrow, thin blade, and this he used for a probe. Red Wing never moved a muscle of his set face, although the pain must have been great. The Frenchman was something of a surgeon, and he soon found the ball. It had passed quite through, and lodged in the muscles on the inside of the limb. He made an incision, gave a squeeze, and the bullet dropped out. Dantern then dressed the wound with a skilful hand, and applied salve, which the Indians use in flesh injuries, and which has a wonderful effect in healing. This done, Red Wing took a seat upon the log beside him.

"Did you meet the Englishman as you intended?" asked Dantern.

"Yes," said Red Wing. "He come there with Irisher. No good. He get away."

"Ha! that was bad. How did it happen?"

Red Wing related his meeting with Warren, the assault of Con, and their fight by the river, with the final escape of both the white men. What puzzled the Indian was the manner in which they obtained the canoe. He could not make that out. The Frenchman saw through it at once, and explained it.

"Why did you not follow them?"

"No time. Mus' meet you here to-night."

"True. What did you say was the name of the man whom you met?"

"White men call him Champlin; other name, Warren," said the Indian.

"Then we will catch him to-night. He had an Irishman with him, you say?"

"Yes; Irisher dere."

"The rascals! We will surely catch them to-night. I know where they are camped."

"Good," said Red Wing, with blazing eyes. "When we take them, I will burn Irisher with fire, because he strike me with a stick. My brother is welcome. Has he come to give his red friends guns?"

"They are at my camp," said Dantern. "You must march your men there in the morning, to make ready for our grand attack."

"Good guns?" queried the Indian.

"No better anywhere. We give our allies weapons which will be of use to them, not like the pewter affairs you get from the English. You did not fool this young agent, it seems. I believe he suspects me. Curse him, I will be even with him. When we take Schenectady, there is one thing I must have."

"My brother has it already. What you want?" said Red Wing.

"There is a young girl there whom they call Dora Ranger — a wild girl. I do not think she has her equal in all the country. I met her once, two years ago, in Schenectady. I have seen her once, since, in Albany, where she was stay-

ping for a time, when I was sent on a mission from Ticonderoga. Do you know who she makes me think of, Red Wing? You remember it, perhaps. It was long ago, when we were on our first raid against this border. I was a boy, then, but as great a devil as could well be imagined. Have you forgotten the family cut off that day?"

"Never forgot," said Red Wing. "Kill all, only fader not come."

"You remember the woman, then. She was a fool. If she had listened to me, I would have saved her. She preferred death to my love. You ought to remember, for you killed her. This girl, Dora Ranger, is her living image."

"Seen her," said Red Wing. "Know all about her. Want her, eh?"

"Yes; I must and will have her. Red Wing, do you know that my first crime haunts me more than any thing I have done since? That woman was so beautiful, so young. Till I die I shall never forget how she looked."

"All good," said Red Wing. "Always glad when Yankees die; hate 'em so."

"Then call in your men and let us go. It is better to end the affair with these two men at once."

Con O'Hara had kept silent a long time. Literally boiling over with rage at the idea of the Frenchman's claim to Dora Ranger, he had managed to keep his temper down. But the quiet way in which Dantern spoke of finishing them was too much. Even then he might not have done any thing but for an unfortunate accident. In rising, his fingers touched a stout oak branch, three feet long and two or three inches thick—the very king of shillalahs. It was more than an Indian could resist. He measured the distance slowly with his "el," and clutched the stick firmly. Before Warren could interpose, O'Hara was in the air, bounding forward. Two quick, scathing blows, and both Red Wing and the Frenchman had measured their length upon the sod. So quickly was it done, that neither had time to recognize his assailant, before the two men were running at full speed toward the river. Ten minutes after, two men sat up, looking at each other in a strange way.

"Ugh!" said Red Wing; "who hit me?"

"That is a question I do not feel able to answer," said Dantern. "I feel as if I had been struck by lightning; upon my honor, I do. We are having bad luck lately. Where is your gun? All right. Whoever did it, did not steal anything—a sure sign it was not an Indian. Call in your men."

Dantern had not long to wait. The Mohawks were not far away, and came quickly at the chief's signal. Selecting eight of the most forward among them, they set out for the river. The rest of the band, obeying the instructions, set off toward the east, keeping on the north bank of the stream.

"Your men will have to swim the river, Red Wing," said Dantern. "My canoe will only hold three. I left it on this point, and—*Sacré!* Where is the canoe?"

They had reached the river-bank, but the craft in which he had crossed the stream was nowhere to be seen. Perhaps the current had carried it away? He looked down the stream, but nothing was visible in the clear moonlight. There was nothing for it but to swim. Muttering curses against the current, Captain Dantern found a log suitable for his purpose and divesting himself of his outer garments, he laid his weapons with them on the log, and pushed out from the shore. The Indians followed his example. But the work necessarily took some time, and it was half an hour from the discovery of the loss of the canoe when they reached the other shore. Then Captain Dantern had to dress himself, and that in turn took some time. When he was ready he took the lead, and they set out to surprise the camp of Warren Clappin.

"Remember, now, Red Wing: you, your two brothers, and Carlino, must take the agent. The rest must do for the Irishman—although I hardly think we will give them much opportunity to struggle. Come on."

They came on with cautious steps, after the manner of the Indian when creeping on his prey. Not a leaf stirred, not a twig broke under their silent feet. Every inch of ground was carefully examined by the hand before the moccasin was allowed to fall upon it. Red Wing trod in the footsteps of Dantern, and the next man in his, and so with the rest. They approached the camp. The fire still burned, though low, and they could make out two recumbent figures on the sod, in the failing light. Dantern laid his hand upon the arm of the

Indian, who replied by a similar pressure, and they began to creep like serpents toward their destined victims, who did not move.

"Perhaps the toil of the day's march has been too much for them," thought the captain. "Good; they will be taken the more easily."

They were half-way across the open space, and still they made no sound. Dantern paused, loosened his knife and pistols, and then went on. Three yards more and his enemies would be in the toils.

Nothing can save them now!

The eyes of the savages glittered like stars in the dark. There is nothing like the hate with which an Indian pursues the object of his rage. They were thinking of the happy hour when these white men should stand at the stake, and they should dance about it, mocking at their pain.

Dantern gave the signal.

There was a sudden cry, a shout which had often rung through the arches of the dim old woods before, and roused the sleeping white man, who rushed forth to meet the deadly scalping-knife. But, these made no struggle, even when they were in the grasp of the foe. The blankets were torn aside, and they saw—what?

Two logs of wood, each about the size of a man's body, which had been wrapped in the blankets on purpose to deceive them. Cries of rage and disappointment made the woods echo again. The nest was warm, but the birds had flown.

"That cursed agent!" roared Captain Dantern. "He was not asleep."

"Champlin is a fox," said Red Wing. "My brother has been fooled. We will follow them. Which way have they gone?"

"Perhaps they take canoe," said a brother of Red Wing's, known as the Sleeping Bear.

"How could they?" replied the captain, testily. "It was on the other side of the stream."

"Good," said the Bear. "Maybe he follow my brother; swim or log."

"So we might," said the captain. "I never thought of

that. If he did he heard every word said. Perhaps he has gone down the river in the canoe."

"What this?" said Red Wing.

A piece of white bark was sticking to the trunk of a tree. On this was scratched, by the point of a knife :

"Captain, I have your horse, I have your canoe. W. C."

"Diable!" shouted Dantern, as he fully made out the writing.

He rushed to the place where the horse had been tied. The beast was gone.

"Domino!" said the captain. "The game is blocked."

CHAPTER VIII.

DORA.

As they stood looking at each other in confusion and dismay, a rifle cracked near at hand, and a deep voice shouted :

"Number 4! Beware the Car-a-men-ctou!"

The bullet found a mark. Sleeping Bear threw up his arms and fell dead upon the sod, shot through the heart. For a moment they stood spell bound, and then the captain shouted :

"Scatter, and search the woods!"

"Search!" cried the same voice. "Your time is not yet. Three more make up the number. Ha! ha! Beware the Red Slayer!"

Though they heard the voice, they could not see the speaker. After an hour's fruitless search, they heard a derisive shout from the other bank of the stream, and knew that the strange being who had constituted himself an avenger was laughing at them. They gave up the search in despair, and set out on their course to their camp. Captain Dantern was moody. He walked with a less erect step, and glanced suspiciously from side to side, as if he feared some danger. Red Wing entered his trepidness.

"My brother is dead," he whispered. "It is strange."

"Wonderful! Who is the Car-a-men-ctou, the Spirit of Death? Curse the Red Slayer! Why does he hate us so?" said Dantern.

"We have wronged him, perhaps," replied Red Wing.

"What does he mean by numbering the men whom he slays? Do you understand?"

"No. Car-a-men-ctou terrible. He hates Mohawks very much. Many have fallen by his hand. If we catch him, fire will not be hot enough to burn him."

"How long is it since you first heard of him?" asked Dantern.

"Many years. Don't know how many. Mohawks fear him very much."

Leaving them to pursue their way, let us follow the footsteps of the young agent and his Irish companion.

Warren had hurried back to his camp. The canoe was light, and he determined to use it in the descent of the river. But, as no amount of persuasion would prevent Con from taking Dantern's horse, the Irishman appropriated the fine animal and proceeded by land to Schenectady, while Warren took the river. They did not lose sight of each other, as Con kept close to the stream, and Warren hugged the southern shore. Two days after they reached Schenectady, having borne the canoe round Little Falls.

Schenectady, or "Dorp," was one of the first settled places on the Mohawk, and from its exposed position, had more than its share of the vicissitudes of war. It was even then a quaint old town, and the flourishing city of to-day has not lost all its characteristics. It was built by the Dutch, and those who pass through the town even now see evidences of their handiwork in the many gables of some of the old houses, the eaves extending over the walks, and the air of quiet thrift which seems to pervade the whole. The town, like Albany, was built with barriers and heavy gates. Leaving his canoe by the riverside, Warren changed places with Con, and prepared to enter the town.

"Master," said the Irishman, "hould on. Wait a bit. I've a worrud to speake in the ear av ye. D'ye think I've need purty well for a grane hand?"

"Certainly."

"Thin w'u'd ye object to say that same to Katrine Von Hagan? No nade to spake it to her, d'ye see, but so that she may hear it. Sure it's as well to dhrop a worrud in s'ason."

"And you have a feeling for the fair Katrine? I'll do it, Con. Not that you deserve it. Katrine is a nice girl, and I will not stand in the way of true lovers."

"T'ank ye, master. I'll do as much for ye whin I mate Miss Dora. That's a fair thrade. Here we are."

They entered the town by the northern gate. It was early in the afternoon, and the streets were full of people, gossiping with each other in the sunshine, or going about their labors. Warren was greeted on every hand with favor, for he was well known and liked in Schenectady, although his family resided at Albany.

"I cry you mercy, Captain Champlin," said one stout burgher—for Warren held a captain's rank in the service—"I am very glad to see you. How did your mission prosper?"

"But poorly," said Warren. "I will tell you more soon, Mr. Van Leebrock. But at present, you must excuse me."

The citizen bowed and the two passed on, Con bestowing a fly wink now and then on some fair Dutch girl who peeped at them through the lattice as they went by, heartily enjoying the look of scorn with which they repaid his presumption. Con was a broth of a boy, and well liked by the Teuton damsels of Schenectady.

"Arrr, Master Warren," said he. "Give me the Dutch girls after all. D'ye see that, now? Isn't it a figure! 'Tain't many have such beauty av form among the English. Sorry time!"

The lady who received this epigram was a stout damsel, weighing over two hundred pounds, who was shaking a fist at Con's head, or of a horse. She replied to Con's salutation by a gesture of contempt.

"Ah, I'll nessell ye, ye Dutch girl! Look at that, now. Never mind, me darlin'. I'll come an' see ye. Don't ye fret till I come. Never shall it be said Con O'Hara w'u'd pass by female loveliness like that."

"What a ridiculous fellow you are, Con," said Warren. "How many lady-loves do you want?"

"Sure it's not above eight or ten I'd be askin' sayin' that same to," said Con. "Because, d'ye see, av ye have too minny, they might interfere wid wan another."

"So they might. You are a perfect picture of fidelity, Con. I don't think I ever saw a better."

"Sure ye may well say that," said Con. "Nobody iver dared say the O'Hara's were not thrue-hearted men, always. That's the use? A man can't have more than ten females he adores and do them all justice in the way av courtin'. Aich ought to have her fair share."

"I'll tell Katrine what you say."

"I'd rather ye w'u'dn't. Because, d'ye see, Katrine has some funny notions about that. She does be thinking wan female is enough for a man. That ain't what I want. Plinty an' variety: that's my motto."

"So I should say. But here I bid you good-by. I am going into Mr. Ranger's."

"So am I!" said Con, stoutly.

"You! And may I ask what you are going in there for?"

"Yis; ye may ask."

"And you must be so good as to answer."

"I'll tell ye. I don't propose to go intil the parlor. The kitchen is good enough for the likes av me. An' whin ye come to think it over, ye'll find we that goes intil the kitchen gits the best av it. Whin ye go intil the parlor, ye'll have Miss Dora, it's thrue. I match her wid Katrine. Thin ye'll kiss her—"

"Con!"

"Aif ye don't, thin ye won't do what I will whin I see Katrine," said Con, "an' I'll have that much superiority over ye. Now see: Katrine will be cookin' some nate little things for the table, an' I'll get the first cut av every thing. That's my idee av livin'!"

"Confound your impudence. There, go along. Go to the kitchen door."

"What ither dire w'u'd ye have me go til?" said Con. "Good luck til ye."

Leaving Con to find his way to the kitchen, which was presided over by Katrine Von Hagan, the goddess of Con's idolatry, Warren knocked at the front door, which was opened almost instantly, so very quickly indeed as to awaken the doubt whether the little maid who did it was not lying in wait near the door when he knocked. She had sharp eyes, and might have seen him coming down the street. This was Dora Ranger, the young lady of whom Captain Dantern had spoken in such high terms in the forest. And truly, she deserved his praise. A connoisseur in female loveliness would have pronounced her faultless in her way. A pretty, dancing, rosy-cheeked little woman, with the most bewitching dimples coming and going in her cheeks. No wonder Warren, as soon as he closed the door:— No matter what he did. But Con certainly could not have had much the advantage of him in the way of kisses.

"I was so much afraid you were in danger, Warren," she said. "How haggard and tired you look. Have you had trouble?"

"More than I ever had crammed into one week in my life, my dear," he said. "Come in here, and I will tell you about it."

He drew her into a room which opened into the hall and they sat down together. It is hard work to tell a connected story with a pair of ripe, tempting lips very close to yours, and a pair of dark eyes flitting every now and then when you speak of "dangers you have passed." Othello must have been a terribly hard-hearted Moor to stand out against the lovely Desdemona so long. Warren got through it somehow; but there were many pauses in the work of story-telling, which the ripe lips imperatively demanded.

"Dora," said Warren, "there is one question I must ask you. I know the mystery which surrounds your birth, and that you do not even know your parents' name. I thought I had better tell it once to-day, but I will not speak of it for fear I may be wrong. Have you any trinkets by which you might be known?"

"I have only a little ring, which is too small for my finger now, and a necklace with a miniature—a woman's face. It looks so like me that I think it must be my mother."

"Ranger found you in the Mohawk village at seven years of age, and the Mohawks claimed that they had taken you from some Canadian Indians they encountered in their warlike expeditions. We can go no further than that. Have you the miniature?"

"Yes," said Dora. "The Indians gave them to me when I came away. Did you never see the locket? It is on the chain."

And out of that receptacle of all kinds which women use so much, the bosom, she pulled a small gold case, which she gave to Warren. It was of elegant workmanship and in its day had been richly engraved. But time had worn it almost smooth. Warren touched the spring, which flew open and revealed a female face, as much like Dora's as any face could be. Warren looked at it long and earnestly. Something in the sweet face attracted him.

"Wear it always," said he. "And if I were you, I would wear it outside. Even so small a thing as that might discover your lost parents, if they yet live. It is a strange world and people drift far apart for years, to meet again in un-appointed places."

He held his cap in his hand, and was preparing to go. She snatched it away and said:

"Don't hurry, after you have been gone so long. I will wear this locket outside if you wish it, Warren, but, I have no hope. If my parents lived it seems to me that we would have met ere now. Doubtless they perished in some Indian massacre, and I was spared for my tender age. Mr. Rutherford was an Indian agent, and when he found me among the Mohawks I was fast becoming an Indian girl, for at that early age we take impressions easily. I do not think it at all probable I shall ever see my parents again. I am a wild and stray. I wonder you ever cared for me."

She had the usual lover's answer. In the mean time, while Warren was doing in the parlor Con was doing in the kitchen, where Katrine Von Hagen was waiting on him—a red-cheeked damsel, of the portly form for which Con had expressed a liking. He was enjoying himself in a characteristic way, sitting by the fire, eating with a hearty good-will from a tray which the provident Katrine had set before him.

"It's an elegant provider ye are, Katrine," said he. "Sure ye'd be a jewel av a wife."

"You better dake care," said Katrine, not ill-pleased, "or I giss you a schlap."

"Phat's it?" said Con.

"Dat's what it po," said Katrine, giving him a sounding slap. "Now you understand?"

"Don't do it ag'in, Katrine darlint," said he. "I'd ruther ye woudn't. Ye have a heavy hand, me gurl."

"You tink so off you fool mit me many dimes," said Katrine. "You talk goot deal. I ton't believe you goot vor mooch."

"Don't ye? Thin ask the masther. I can't say any fairer than that. Just ask him, and hear what he says. Mebbe whin ye hear how I killed twenty-wan Injins at wan shot ye will tink I am some good. I mowed 'em down before me like grass before the scythe. I hit wan big spal' een, an' says he, 'Good-mornin'. 'The top av the mornin' til ye,' sez I, for ye mind I didn't name to have iny M hawk negur like me in g'ud manners. 'Yer a thief,' sez I. 'Thank ye, sur,' sez he. 'No thanks,' sez I, 'I don't ask none for telling the truth!'"

"He spack English?" queried Katrine.

"Like a native," said Con. "As well as meself. 'Well,' sez he, 'Low's the wife an' chilfther?' 'Excuse me,' sez I, 'I'm not yet bound in them lowly bonds; but, be the same to you, I will be whinver Katrine Ven Hagan gives me her consent to be led to the sacred altar!'"

"I s'pose you ag'in ef you don't dake care, Con," said Katrine. "I ain't a wool."

"Neddy ever accused ye av it. Aif they had, sorra bit woul I marry ye, alowd. But ye are far from that same. 'Now, me darlnt,' sez I to the big Injin, 'have ye the courage to stand up to a decent Irish boy what's handy wid his fists? Aif you have, come an' see me.' Wou'd ye believe it, the big Injin come at me! At Katrine, I just draw back me arm, an' then ye'll throw the boy av the scoundrel, an' killed him on the spot!"

"That's a great har," said Katrine. "I ton't believe it."

"Ye don't? Now, the devil carry me off ye ain't worse

than an Injin. I know where the body lies, an' aff ye want to take a journey I can show it til ye, will me mark upon it. Ah, the things I have seen this two days! Min as big as houses, dogs as big as the min. Hundreds av them all, an' poor two av us. Ye don't believe me. Come here an' give me a kiss, an' believe that ye are goin' to marry a man who has the strength of tin in his right arm. *Eria go bragh!*

CHAPTER IX.

DORA AND THE FRENCHMAN.

WARREN could not rest in Schenectady. He believed that the town was in danger, and that a band of Indians lay not far away, waiting a favorable moment to pounce upon the place. Scarcely a day passed by when he was not on the trail, looking for signs of the enemy. He had gone out one day for this purpose, and Dora, being alone, had wandered beside the river, and sat down in a shaded place, weaving a chaplet of evergreens. Hearing the beat of hoofs, she looked up and saw a face which she remembered as having seen at Albany. It was Captain Louis Dartern. He had taken more than ordinary care with his costume this day, and was ~~near~~ even to the verge of soppishness. His mustache was carefully dressed, his hair in admirable order, and he wore the tasty uniform of the French service with infinite grace. When Dora had met him in Albany she rather liked him, for he was a man of good powers of conversation, and knew what to say to please a woman. He smiled when he saw Dora, and springing from the saddle, with the grace of a finished gentleman raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

"Mademoiselle, how can I express my pleasure in meeting you so opportunely?"

She snatched her hand away, rather abashed at the salute.

"Were you coming to our village, Monsieur Dartern?" she asked.

"I intended to come, if I did not meet you without. It was to see you I came."

"Indeed?"

"You exclaim! I have my reasons for this. I want to take you away from Schenectady. In fact, I *must* take you away."

"Sir?"

"I startle you. I am not a good talker. It would be idle for me to say I love you, but this is the truth. Ever since we met in Albany, you have been my constant thought. With you in my mind I came to this colony; and you are to go back with me—as my wife, remember. Ah, bah! You are angry. You can not understand my rough way of wooing. I do not flatter you. Yet I can not explain myself. Without further preface, then, you must come with me."

"I will call for help. Your impudence is boundless."

"Do. We are two miles from the town, and doubtless you could make yourself heard, although I hardly think so. My dear girl, sit down on this bank. There. I throw my blanket across this bush, and sit down near you."

"Not quite so near, monsieur," said Dora. "I prefer to have you keep your distance."

"Very good. Then I will do so. Do you know that it is a remarkable thing that a man can love a woman at first sight? And a man of my station, too. I am by birth allied to one of the noblest families in France. There are not many like it. I delight in the honor of France. She shall have distinction; she shall have power. I have sworn to do my best!"

"I believe I know your errand in this colony, monsieur," she said. "There are those who have their eyes upon you. See that you do not fall into a snare."

"Do not talk of that," he said. "It is enough for you to know that I propose taking you with me, and it shall be done. Let me tell you once for all that I should not do this but for your sake. Will you go with me quietly?"

She stopped. He took a pistol from his belt and aimed it at his head.

"If you do not go away at once I will fire," she cried. Her voice laughing.

"If you like to try it you may," he said. "The pistol is not loaded. Let me take it again."

He laid his hand upon the weapon, wrested it out of her grasp, and thrust it back into his belt, retaining his hold upon her wrist.

"That is what we call a pious fraud in France," he said. "It was loaded. Now you must come with me."

"Spare me, Monsieur Dantern. Let me return home."

"One would think you were going to your burial instead of to your wedding. Did I not tell you I intended to marry you? I ought, at least, to have done so. When we can find a priest, we shall be made one flesh. You must really pardon me, my dear girl, if I am forced to make it a sort of Sabine wedding, but circumstances in this case are stronger than I am. I assure you I have done all in my power to get at you by any fair means, but it was impossible. You had too many friends about you."

She struggled desperately, beating him away with both hands, while he laughingly attempted to pinion her, with the cool impudence so characteristic of the man. She had to yield at length, though crying out for help, in the vain hope that some hunter might be passing by and hear her. He seemed to have the same thought, for he clapped his hand roughly upon her mouth, and hissed out an order for her to be silent. As he was dragging her toward the horse she thought she heard a footfall, and releasing her mouth by an effort, screamed again. The footsteps sounded nearer, and a man bounded out upon the river-bank. It was Peter Meigs! His eyes were flashing fire, and he carried a heavy hatchet in his right hand.

"Drop the girl and turn, whoever you are," he screamed. "Drop her, I say!"

The Frenchman obeyed. Loosing his hold upon the girl, she dropped to the ground, while he snatched at the hilt of his sword. As he did so, the hunter saw his face and uttered an unnatural cry. It might have been fear, it might have been joy, or both combined. The Frenchman drew his blade and faced the wild figure with undaunted mien.

"I have not the honor of knowing you, my good friend," he said. "But, if you have any regard for the safety of your

body, you will at once leave this place, and allow me to attend to my own business."

"I have the honor of knowing you, black-hearted dog of a Frenchman. What! do you come here and try to take away our fairest flowers? I will kill you. Do you think I do not know you, murderous wretch? You are Captain Louis Dantern, the most detestable scoundrel who ever cursed the earth. Are you eager to die? Go away."

"Look you, my worthy man," said Dantern, "it seems you know me. How you know me I do not profess to understand, nor do I care. But, of this be assured: if you do not take your carcass away from here, and that quickly, I will run you through the body."

"I have avoided you," screamed the hunter, "because I believed your fate was not yet to be. You will have it. Kill me? I can not be killed until my time has come. I can not die until my work is accomplished."

Dantern made a pass at him, and at the same moment, while skillfully parrying the thrust with his hatchet, Meers uttered a shrill whistle. At the sound a dark body was seen to bound through the air, and Peril was at the throat of the Frenchman. He made a quick thrust at the savage animal, but did not touch him. The fangs of Peril were fastened in the thick skin about his neck, which saved his throat from the jaws of the beast.

The Frenchman, who would not have given up to any human foe, screamed for help. It did not seem to be the hunter's wish to kill him, for he dragged the hound away after taking away the pistol and sword. Dantern rose, gnawing at his lip until it was bloody. The hunter did not look at him. His gaze was fixed upon the face of the girl, like one entranced, and he was muttering to himself. "Her face; her form. Who is this?"

"May I ask what you intend to do with me?" said the captain, coolly. "I am in your power."

"Keep quiet. I will attend to you presently," said the hunter. "Why do you speak, you dog? Do you want me to kill you?"

"Do not be harsh with him, sir," said Dora. "How can I thank you!"

"Speak again, girl," said the hunter, wildly. "Peril, do you hear this?"

The dog uttered a joyful bark and Dora looked at her champion with some dread.

"Don't be afraid of us, sweet one," said Meigs. "Neither I, nor yet Peril, would hurt a hair of your head. We could not. Call him, please. See if he will come to you."

Dora held out her hand and called the dog. He came and laid his head in her hand without showing any reluctance. She fondled him, and he looked up in her face confidently, while the hunter applauded.

"Trust his instincts," said he. "If I knew nothing of you whatever, I would trust you after that with any thing."

"You may go to the devil!" cried a voice, at this juncture. Both wheeled quickly, in time to see the captain in the saddle, in the act of putting spurs to his horse. Meigs raised his pistol, but missed fire, and with a wild shout the Frenchman plunged down the road and disappeared. Peril would have followed, but his master called him in.

"No, old lad," he said. "It is useless. Let him go. He will come to the end of his rope before long."

"It is better as it is," said Dora. "Far better that he should go. I thank you, sir. He meant to carry me away from my friends, to force me to marry him against my will, and if you had not come I could not have escaped."

"What is your name?" said Meigs, abruptly.

"Dora Ranger."

"Eh! The girl who is to marry the Indian agent, Warren Champlin?"

She blushed so quickly that he needed no answer. "Did he come in safe?" he said.

"Yes. But he has gone out again. I can't keep him in order. He seems to be in love with the woods, even when they swarm with Indians."

"Perhaps he spoke of me, then? My name is Meigs—Peter Meigs. This is my dog Peril. Did the young ter speak of me? .

"As you deserved. He said you saved his life. I have to thank you for two things, now: his life, and mine."

"Don't trouble yourself to do that. The man that would

not aid you does not serve the name. So the lad remembered me? I am glad of that. I don't think I would have come so near the settlement if it had not been for him. I am getting crazed, I think. Girl, who was your father?"

"I do not know, sir. I lost him when I was a child, and was found among the Mohawks," she answered. "I never saw him and never hope to see him. It is thought he perished in some Indian massacre, but it is not really known."

"My poor child. Did you lose all in that sad way? And the Mohawks; curse them, they are the cause of my misfortunes. And when I speak of them, I mean the Caughnawaga branch of the tribe, proselytes to the Catholic religion, who follow the French banner. It was men of this tribe who make my life desolate, and I hate them with a deadly hate. What are you looking for?"

"I have lost something, sir. A locket. I value it highly because I think it is my mother's picture which it contains."

They searched for it. The chain had broken in the struggle with the captain and the picture had slipped off. He found it, lying open upon the ground, and picked it up, glancing at the picture. As he saw the face, he reeled, clasped both hands upon his forehead, and fell forward, prostrate. Dora, alarmed at the ghastly pallor of his face, ran to him and lifted him from the ground. He was in a swoon. It must have been a terrible shock which robbed that strong frame of its strength. She ran to the river and brought some water in his cap, with which she sprinkled his face. He gasped, and opened his eyes.

"The picture, the picture," he cried.

"You have it in your hand still," she said. "What is the matter, sir?"

"An infamy which troubles me often. No matter. It will be over soon. I am stronger already. I am going to look at it again before I give it back to you."

He sat to a sitting posture and opened the locket in the palm of his hand, gazing long and earnestly upon it. There seemed to be a species of fascination which chained his eyes to the picture. Once or twice he looked up, but it was only to glance at Dora's face and then back upon the picture. At last he spoke:

"Where did you get this, child?"

"It was about my neck when Mr. Ranger, my adopted father, found me among the Mohawks," she answered.

"Ah! You do not know what a stock this has given me. I know this picture, and one day you may understand what cause I had to love the owner. There is something here which you have never seen. I know the picture better than you."

He worked with his thumb-nail for a moment, and the back of the locket opened, showing another picture. It was that of a young man, dressed in a rich and expensive garb, wearing the sword and scarf of a gentleman of the period. A handsome face it was, full of light and joy. The roughened, weather-stained countenance of the leinter changed as he gazed upon it.

"So young, so ardent, hoping in this great land to be the means of building up a great country, the rival of England. How soon your day-dreams failed. Child, you never saw this picture before?"

"Never. You, who know the picture, ought to tell me who they are."

"Your father and mother, Dora! Fall upon your knees before this picture of your mother as you would before a shrine, for she was an angel on earth, and is now an angel in heaven. Do not ask me how I know all this. The time is not come when I can tell you all I know. When that time comes, you shall hear it. I have still some work to do. When that is accomplished you shall know all."

"Why not tell me now?"

"Because I have registered an oath not to speak, until the work is done. Ask me no questions, for I will not answer. I will away upon my task. Rest in peace until I come to you. Peril! Up, old dog. The path is before us. Let us make the most of the day."

"At least tell me why you take such an interest in me and my parents."

"Not even that. Get back to the village and bid them look to their gates, for De Manci, Dantern and Le Moyne are on the war-path and they look toward either Albany or Schenectady. Bid them take this warning in good faith, for it is

well meant. I am in search of young Champlin. Bid him meet me at the three pines on the slope, near the sulphur spring at the mountain foot. The lad remembered me kindly. I am glad of that. I should be sorry to think him ungrateful."

"He is not," she said.

"I am glad to believe it. Good-by. Think of me kindly, for I mean kindly to you."

He whistled to the dog, and she saw his sturdy figure trudge away in the distance.

Warren came back an hour after, and the young girl told him what had happened in the forest. He had not succeeded in finding any Indian signs which he dared follow. There were so many fresh trails leading through the forest, that he did not know which way to turn. Another source of anxiety was the fact that the Caughnawara Mohawks made the same fires and wore the same moccasins—two of the chief ways by which one Indian trail is distinguished from another—is the manly of the tribe, who had continued faithful to the old ways. He knew that Meigs could aid him if he would, for he was more learned in woolecraft than any young man could be. He determined to set out at once to meet the woman, and be ready to take the trail next day.

Leaving the Indian in the village, with a strict injunction to keep watch over the safety of his young mistress, he set out. His course took him away from the river, some five miles north, through a deep wood. The path was dangerous, for he knew that the country swarmed with Indian scouts, and it would take all his skill to avoid them. If he could have traveled a direct course he might have reached the foot of the mountain in an hour. But he avoided the paths made use of by the runners, and chose less frequented and more circuitous ways, watchful with each step, for every covert held concealed a foe. On he went, his hand always grasping a weapon, ready to spring into the thicket at the slightest alarm.

He had gone six or seven miles on his road, and had heard no sound of pursuit, and yet he did not relax his caution. Suddenly, cries of terrible meaning sounded near at hand, and he recognized an English shout among them. Then the sound

of a combat came to his ears. Naturally brave, he did not hesitate, but parting the bushes, looked in upon a strange scene. He saw Peter Meigs in deadly combat with two Indians of the band of Red Wing, who were assaulting him with knife and hatchet. There was something wonderful in the look of the hunter's face. He seemed to enjoy the struggle. He smiled as he struck at them, warding off their blows with the barrel of his rifle. Peril sat upon his haunches a few feet away, evidently waiting for the signal of his master.

"You are a Mohawk," cried the hunter, addressing one of his assailants. "You are a Huron. I have no quarrel with the Hurons. Go your way."

"The white man's scalp shall hang in my girdle," said the Mohawk. "Do you know me? I am a chief of Caughnawaga. Many scalps have hung at my belt, and I must have yours."

"You are fools," cried Meigs. "Do you think to kill me? I can not die until my work is accomplished. Huron, go your way and leave this man to me. His fate is sealed!"

"I will not go," cried the Huron, sending his hatchet at the head of the hunter. "Die, white dog."

The hunter stooped low, and the hatchet flew over his head, while at the same time he received a stroke from the hatchet of the Raven upon the barrel of his rifle.

"At him, Peril," he cried, pointing to the Huron.

Warren held his breath as he saw the body of the hound in the air, darting out like a serpent from his coil. Vain was the interposition of the hand and arm of the Indian. He was dragged to the earth, and Peril stood with his paws planted on his breast, waiting his master's signal to tear the life out of his body. The signal was not given, and Meigs closed with the Mohawk. There was a confused struggle for a moment, and then Warren saw the Indian bent across the knee of Meigs, dead. His giant strength had soon finished the combat. Warren saw him working at the body for a moment, and then he suffered it to drop to the earth.

The young scout called the name of the hunter. Meigs started up quickly, full of anger. His countenance changed when he saw Warren emerge from the thicket, and he hurried to meet his young friend.

"Come away," he said; "we have work to do. Peril, watch the Huron until I whistle; then come to me."

"You do not mean to kill the Huron then?" said Warren.

"I don't know why I spared him," said the hunter. "Perhaps it is because I saw that girl to-day. Warren, she is a beautiful child. I never saw any thing so beautiful in my life, except her mother. A curse upon the Indians! I will kill the Huron."

"No, no; come away. This mercy may do you good."

CHAPTER X.

THE SUDDEN BLOW.

FIVE miles is no great distance by daylight, but at night, and in a forest swarming with savage foemen, it is something to traverse. The hunter and Warren Champlin were too well versed in forest lore not to understand their danger, and they traveled slowly, taking heed of their steps. As they proceeded, they became aware that the Indians were in front of them, and in force. The hunter looked troubled, and his fear was reflected on the face of his companion. But neither dared to tell the other the cause of his fear. The sounds which they heard would have been slight ones to most people, but to these men they had a special significance, though they were nothing more than the calls of night-birds, the screech of the hawk, and other sounds heard in the forest at night. To these these sounds boded no good. They went on more slowly, their weapons prepared. At times they were forced to turn out of their way, as the calls sounded directly in front. These men knew that their foes were as wily as they, and that the Huron they had spared would inform them that they were in the woods. With all their caution, they fell in with one of the advance-guard of the enemy, and were only apprised of his vicinity by the rush of a silent arrow, and by the wound received by the young agent in the shoulder. He

uttered a low cry, which attracted the attention of the hunter, who had heard the twang of the bowstring.

"Are you hurt?" he whispered, anxiously, coming close to him.

"Not much; a flesh wound."

"Come with me," said the hunter. "We must have a sight to see to your wound."

"No, no; we can not lose the time," said the young agent. "We must go on."

"It is impossible. Of all wounds, we must not dally with that of an arrow. There is no telling but the scoundrel may have steeped the point in venom."

Whiz!

An arrow passed close to the ear of the speaker, and he cried out to the dog, who launched himself into the thicket. They heard a terrified cry, and the bushes cracked as the Indian lurking there started up to run. Fearing some damage to his favorite, Meigs called him off. He returned reluctantly, with a piece of blanket, stained with blood, which he worried and growled over, in his jaws. Meigs seized his friend by the hand, and hurried away. For half an hour they kept on their course, and passed through tangled bush and brake, until they came to a little cabin, ruined and fast going to decay, which was built in a small opening in the forest.

"This is one of my haunts," said the hunter. "I doubt if there are twenty men, Indians or white, who know of its existence. Is your wound painful?"

"Rather stiff and sore," said Warren. "I have pulled out the arrow."

Meigs produced a flint and steel, and kindled a small fire on the earthen floor of the cabin. He had a small pile of pitch pine knots in one corner. One of these he lighted, and threw into a crevice of the wall, and it shed a fitful light about the narrow room.

"Who lived here?" said Warren.

"A settler who was cut off with his whole family by the band of R. I. Wing, in a single night. Poor fellow! He, at least, was not doomed to live on in torment, as I have done. Perhaps it was mercy to slay him, after all. I knew him well: a rough, rude man, loving his wife and children, doing

learn to do one, and content to live out his harmless life by tilling the soil and hunting the game with which these woods abound. Let me see your wound. Off with your coat."

Warren obeyed, and standing close to the pine torch, they examined the wound. The arrow had passed quite through the flesh upon the upper part of the shoulder. Warren had pushed it head through, broken it off, and then pulled out the arrow.

"It might have been worse," said the hunter. "The arrow was not poisoned; I know the effect of such a wound too well. Wait a moment and I will get an herb which grows on side, which will heal this in a few days. It need not disable you. I am glad it is the left arm. You may need the right before our work is done."

He left the tent, and returned after a short absence with some leaves in his hand of which he made a sort of poultice, which he placed upon the wound. Then he made a bandage which he passed under the arm of the wounded man and secured it.

"Let us make haste," said Warren. "I would not have stopped for this wound."

"Right you are. The arrow might have been poisoned, although in this case it was not. I think we had better strike the river below Schenectady, and come up in a canoe which I have hidden at that point. I am afraid we shall come to harm. A curse upon Dantem. He means mischief, I fear."

They hurried out of the cabin, and the hunter, knowing his position well, took the lead again. The track they pursued led straight to the river, three miles below Schenectady. As they reached the river-bank a fitful glare shot up the western sky, in the direction of the village, which increased in size and more until the whole sky seemed in a blaze.

"Do you see that?" cried the hunter. "We shall be too late. My God, if we should!"

He took the canoe and pushed out. They had two paddles and the light craft shot up the stream rapidly, under the cover of the rapid waves. Three miles up the water is turbulent and dangerous to the wood, but the cedar canoe could stand it. But now the wind had turned, and they found the

express. They had seen that glare upon the sky before, and knew what it boded. Their only hope was that it was the light of some building further up the stream than Schenectady, but they hardly dared to hope that this might prove true. Dantern was hardly the man to announce his approach to the doomed village in that manner. Not a word was spoken. The two labored on, with set teeth, laboring breath and flushed cheeks. A sound came to their ears on the wind which filled them with dread. Shrieks of agony, cries of rage, and the war-shout of the Indian. The hunter reeled as he stood in the bow of the canoe, propelling it with mighty strokes. Warren could not speak, and the boat shot round a point, in full view of the village. Their worst suspicions were realized. Schenectady was in a blaze in every part.

The doom which they had feared had fallen on them. The warnings they had received had not been acted upon, and instead of placing guards against the savage foe they had not even closed their gates. At that dread hour of the night when the senses of men seem locked closest in slumber, two hundred French and Indians, with Le Moyne, Dantern and Red Wing leading them on, had pushed open the gates and entered the devoted town. The first sound they heard was the **war-cry at their very doors.**

"They woke, to die amid flame and smoke,
And shout and groan and saber stroke."

No sentry was there to utter the cry of warning. The bullet and knife were at work before they were fairly aroused to a sense of their peril. Then was enacted one of the merciless massacres so common in the history of the French and Indian wars. Blood, fire and death! The whoop of the savages, the shouts of the scarcely more merciful Frenchmen, and the crash of falling timbers; the cry for mercy, soon hushed in death; the wail of the infant, torn from its mother's arms; the shriek of the mother, suddenly bereft of her offspring, and the sturdy shouts of those few who had found weapons and fought for their lives! These were the sounds and sights which greeted the men who had come too late to be of any use. The work was almost done when they arrived, and a crowd of fugitives were rushing by up in the

opposite bank of the river, toward Albany. A few yet struggled feebly, but as the two men gazed, there was a rush of savage formen, and these went down. Pandemonium reigned in the still village. The Mohawks, recking with blood, ran madly up and down, hoping to find new victims to add to those already lying dead among the blazing buildings. But the sight which wrung the heart of the young agent most was to see Dantern, standing apart from the rest, with a guard of Frenchmen, surrounding some unfortunates who had been taken prisoners, and holding Dora firmly by the wrist. Yes, there she stood, compelled to look on, while she saw the destruction of her native town and the death of her friends. The place where the canoe lay was in the shadow, and while they could see every movement in the devoted town, the Indians could not see them.

A splash in the water near them called their attention, and they saw a dark form floating down the stream. The Indians, busy in their work of destruction, did not notice this, and the current swept the body toward the shore. Meigs bared his knife and waited. If it should prove to be an Indian, his fate was sealed. But it might be some unfortunate escaped from that scene of blood and death. Their doubts were soon solved. It was a man clinging to a blackened beam, and suffering the current to bear him where it would. Meigs stepped out of the canoe and ran silently to the place where the log must come to land. As the man raised himself from the water he was suddenly seized, borne down upon his back, and the iron hand of the hunter laid upon his mouth.

"Not a breath, not a whisper," he hissed, "or you are a dead man."

The man who had escaped made a sudden bound and fastened upon the throat of the speaker, to whom he clung with a tenacity which spoke well for his courage. Meigs was forced to put forth all his strength to overcome him. A desperate struggle ensued which ended in the overthrow of the new comers. Meigs had him down. His knife gleamed in the air, when a well-known voice cried out.

"Strike, ye English! Strike ye red scalped villain! It is I who I come to live in, and what I have seen this night."

It was Con O'Hara.

"Be silent," whispered the hunter. "Don't you know my voice?"

"Sorra time. Ochone, the sights I have seen! and the sounds I have heard the night. Will I ever forget them? Whooh! Know ye! The devil a bit do I know ye. But it's a decent bla'g'ard ye are anyhow. I like ye well."

"Your master is here," said the hunter. "I am Peter Meigs."

"I never thought to see the day whin I'd be glad to see ye. Och, the sad night. Oh, master, master. Is this the ivel av our campaigning together. I'm glad to see ye safe, Master Warren. But the rest. Matthew, Mark, Luke an' John, pray for them. Howly Virgin, pray for them. It's a dreadful sight over yon."

"Ah, Con. I am glad you are safe," said Warren.

"Better men are lost," said Meigs.

"Better men. I don't know that they're better men. But, I'm sorry for them. I find ye safe, Master Warren. But Master Ranger is dead, aroo! An' besides him, hardly a pritty man else. An' some poor winnin'. Och, the sad day. I'm kilt entirely. An' d'ye know, a baste av a Finchman have taken Katrine, an' he says he'll marry her. To the devil wid him. I thried to save her."

"And Dora?"

"She's safe yit. Another Finchman have her. I was in bed, slaping as swately as the infant in the cradle. Be the same token I wint to see Katrine that day an' she told me w'u'd I wait until ye were married til Miss Dora. An' I said, yis, av it was purty soon. Thin she axed me w'u'd it's at me if she took me that same time. I said yis ag'in. I went home with a light heart, an' slept like a top. In the middle av a dream such as ye never heard av I was waked by the devil's own yelling in front av the house an' I ran to the window. There I see the red devils dancing about like mad, an' knocking at the door wid axes. I didn't wait to put on me clothes, d'ye mind. Sorra rag have I but the pants an' shirt. I run out the back door an' there I saw the Injin ye shot in the arm - the devil carry him wherever he goes - an' that Eng'arl Finchman we met in the woods, Master Warren. They grabbed me, an' lift me wid two Finchmen. Thin they

brone intil the house an' killed Masther Ranger an' his good lady, an' I brought out Miss Dora an' Katrine alive. Sorra resave the bit av sup I ate til I get her away from them. Thin the Kairy-Kairy began, for they had been pooty quiet till they got Miss Dora, an' they set fire til ivery house asther they stole ivery ting they cu'd lay their hands on, bad 'cess til thin, an' may their food be poison an' their drink any ting but swate. Yis, howl away, ye rill divils. It's little that's left for ye to barn, may how. Willaloo, murther, I'm kilt intirely."

"Go on with your story," said the hunter, who was watching the movements of the Indians keenly. "This rejoicing over their bloody work will continue for an hour. The murdering has ceased for want of victims."

"The fire got hot, where we stood," continued Con, wiping his eyes, "an' me two Frenchmen kem down near the river, where it was cool. I watched me time, an' jist thin I see the black log floating down. I caught the Frenchmen by the legs an' tussell them intil the wather. They crawled out dripping, an' thried to shoot me. But they had wet their powder in the river an' I was hangin' til the log, floatin' away merrily. They was the l - 'matured in the lot, for they only said, 'Screed' two or three times, an' lit me go."

"A sad tale, only too often repeated in the history of these times," said the hunter, sadly. "There is nothing for us but to wait and see how the sad affair will end."

The tumult had ceased while the fire still blazed. The Indians who had pursued the fugitives were straggling in, one at a time, some of them bearing scalps at their girdles. Their companions greeted them with shouts of welcome and showed their own hideous trophies. Meirs looked on with a sullen air, as one who gave up to something he could not prevent. Warren looked sadly at the group of unhappy captives, who stood surrounded by enemies, dejectedly gazing upon the ruined town. Many of them never saw their houses again. Some could not endure the fatigues of the journey to the Canadas, and fell out by the way, only to die by the hatchet at last. In fact, still more than half were many personal friends of Warren Chapman, and though their fate had been brought upon them in a great measure by their own carelessness in neglecting to take proper means for their safety after the repeated

warnings they had received, he did not think of this in view of their probable fate.

Dantern, still holding Dora by the hand, forced her to sit down beside him on a settle which had been thrown out of one of the houses, while his followers and the Indians collected the live stock for which this expedition had been mainly undertaken. Every horse and cow which could be found was brought forward, and prepared for the journey to the north. The Frenchman looked on with a smile, little thinking that two deadly tides were so near him, and that without knowing it the presence of Dora only saved him from death. Before morning came the work was done. Every thing of value was collected, and the main body of the French and Indians, with the captured cattle and other stock, had set out on their return. Meigs watched the long line of torches as they fled into the woods, and noticed that only five Indians, besides Red Wing, remained as a guard for Dora and Katrine. Three fine horses were also retained, and it was evident that Dantern did not intend to return with the main body.

"You will go with me?" said Meigs, in a questioning tone.

"If I live," was the stern reply.

They clasped hands. The compact was made.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CAR-A-MEN-ETOUE.

THE Frenchman had done his work well. He had planned this incursion for two years, and was not likely to fail at the moment of success. Schenectady was in ruins, though many of the inhabitants had escaped. He did not care so much for that, since the realization of his fondest hope had been verified. She was in his hands, the woman whom he loved, and for whose sake he had undertaken this toilsome enterprise. He rode by her side, and never took his gaze from her. He feasted his eyes on her beauty, but she sat pale and cold, never looking at him.

"Why do you not speak?" he said. "Why do you sit like a statue, looking out into space? I can not endure it. I will not find your tongue."

"I will, since you order it," said Dora. "What a villain you are!"

"Eh? Perhaps it would have been as well not to rouse you, since you know so well how to give one the rough side of your tongue. Villain, you call me. Do you know that I am used to pet names, my dear? Call me what you like, so that you do not maintain that stony calm."

"Do you think God will suffer such a wretch to live?" she said. "It is impossible. Your victims will go before the bar of God, and there accuse you."

He struggled his shoulders in true French style, at this fiery speech.

"Oui, mademoiselle. But, have you considered that all this is the fortune of war and that your friends would do as much for us if they had the opportunity?"

"They could not be guilty of so dreadful a massacre," she said.

"They not only could, but they have," he replied. "But, we need not quarrel about that. It will hardly pay either of us. It is enough for me that I have realized my hope in getting you in my power. My little maid, do you know that I love you beyond anything on earth? You it is who have destroyed Schenckel; not I. Had you never lived, if I had not met you in Albany, I should never have come on this expedition. So do not blame me any more. Blame your beauty, which led me astray."

"Why have you let go on with the rest, sir?" she said.
"Why will we linger behind?"

"Simply for the reason that I wanted you to myself. I care for no partnership in this business. You must be mine."

"I have faith enough in the generosity of true Frenchmen to believe that they will not refuse to aid me, when we come to a settlement."

"The very thing I have provided against, my dear girl," said the Frenchman. "I know my countrymen too well to trust them, where a lady is concerned. When we reach a French settlement, you will be my wife."

"Never."

"So you say. But I have my reasons for believing that I am in the right. For instance, there is a Jesuit priest in the Indian village toward which we are going, who will take us when I ask him."

"I will fall down on my knees to him and entreat him to save me."

"Precisely. He will bless you, raise you up, and marry you to me all the same. You do not know the grand order of the Jesuits if you suppose they can be moved by any of the ordinary feelings which appeal to the hearts of men."

"Then I appeal to you. I ask you to pause, before it is too late, and you are guilty of a crime for which there is and can be no atonement. I do not love you; am even betrothed to another."

"I have concluded to overlook your bad taste in falling in love with any one else after first seeing me," he said, with a light laugh. "I will marry you all the same."

"I will kill myself first."

"That would be foolish," said he, laughing.

"Or if I can get a weapon in my hand I will kill you."

"That would be more to the point. Thank you. I am charmed at your kind intentions. But really, laying joking aside, I have stated my intentions. You are to be my wife. Few men in my position, having you in their power, would take that trouble; but, I intend to marry you."

Dora became silent. She saw how useless words must be. She was as much alone with him in the forest as if no being breathed within a hundred miles. The faces of the Indians were immovable as if carved in bronze. She knew that they would not interfere, no matter what he might say or do. Two of them marched in front, two on each side of the horse ridden by Katrine, while Red Wing walked between the two horses. They were pressing up a forest path when an Indian came out, meeting them. His garments were daubed in blood and mire, his blanket torn and his whole person in disorder. He held in his hand one of those carls which the Cat-a-men-ctou left upon the breast of his victims, bearing the inscription:

"Number 5! The Cat-a-men-ctou walks!"

This, like others they had seen, was written in the blood of the victim, evidently traced upon the card by a human finger. The man who carried it was one of the band, who had been out during the night, as a sort of rear-guard. Red Wing snatched the card from his hand with a cry of rage.

"Wanton has been in the forest all night," he cried. "Where did he find this?"

"I was left to see that no one came up behind us," said Warren, "and I had my bow. Two men came, and I shot one with an arrow. I can not tell if I hit him, for the night was dark. Then I shot again and some savage beast flew like a bird into the bushes. The man called him away, or the animal would have devoured me. I fled to the north and lay down to wait until morning. When I awoke I saw something lying on the ground. It was the body of the Raven, with many wounds about the heart. This lay upon his breast and I knew that the Car-men thou walked the woods again."

Red Wing shuddered. There was something terrible to him in the mysterious conduct of the man known as the Car-men-eter, if man he was. A foreboding of evil filled his heart. The Raven, who had been killed, was another of the Chippewa he had led, who were famous for their excesses along the border. Danvers looked over his shoulder and then stole back to examine the card, uttering a low whistle as he looked at the inscription.

"Our friend of the bloody hand seems to be on the war-path again," he said. "I do not understand this fellow. Who can he be?"

"The Spirit of Death walks the woods," replied the Indian, looking nervously over his shoulder, as if he feared to see the ghostly being start up from the bushes and confront him. "His hand is ever to shed blood. Who is left of all those who killed the white woman in the cabin by the river, so long ago? Only you and I."

"I? You speak true. The Raven was of that party, upon my word. This is drawing close to us. Do you think they have still carry a stone in his pocket so long as that to destroy our friends? I do not understand it. Let us be ready. If the Indian in this country we may expect a most deadly moment."

They pushed on hurriedly. Night came and found them camped beside a bright spring running out of the mountain side, whose clear, cold water refreshed the matter their long walk. The Frenchman caught some fish and broiled them skillfully over the coals. Though sick at heart, Dora was so fatigued by her long journey that she ate with a keen appetite. The night was cold, for the Indian summer was past and a slight snow was falling. The captain improvised a sort of tent for the girls from branches cut from the trees about them, and having a good number of blankets, they were enabled to pass the night well. Dora was very sad. She had heard nothing of Warren, but was glad that he was not in the village when the massacre occurred, because he would not have fled while a man stood up, and must inevitably have fallen. Dantern awoke them early, asked how they passed the night, and helped them to some breakfast with a courtly air which Dora could not but admire, while she hated the man.

" You have no idea, my dear girl," he said, " how much it goes to my heart to be harsh with you. Necessity knows no law. Our courtship has been short and sharp, to be sure. Very short, I may say. It is a curious thing that you will not look kindly upon me."

She gave him no answer except a look of scorn, at which he laughed. This made her the more angry. If she could have vexed him, he would have ceased to have the advantage of her. She had called him a villain and he said that it was all the same. She had told him his destination was certainly not Paradise, and he replied by the good old Mahomedan doctrine, " what will be, will be." What could she do or say to such a fellow ?

Katrine took him in hand and expended upon him a quantity of low Dutch exhortations and gutturals to which he made no reply. She had tried the same thing on the Indians, who only looked astonished, not being able to comprehend a word she said. Having relieved her mind, Katrine told her young mistress to " keep still; she was made for a n----r like these Frenchmen." This was the only comfort Dora received. Their course took them through a wild waste of scrub land, rising from Schenectady toward the north. A vast region, with b

was only trodden by French and Indians on their way to harry the border settlements of the English. They had turned out of the track used by the French, and struck into one of the paths toward the Caughnawaga Mohawk settlement. On they went, the cold striking a chill into Dora. Dantern wrapped her in a blanket, and entreated her to be careful of herself.

They rested that night by one of the streams running toward the Mohawk, rapid, though narrow, abounding in the delicious brook-trout, unlike any other fish in the world. A beautiful little stream, but which, like other waters in the State, had witnessed many a scene of slaughter. Near the place where they halted was a rude hut, which had been set up for the convenience of those traversing the country, and as a meeting place for treaties with the tribes. Dantern made a fire within the hut, in a rude stone fire-place which they had built, and then caught some trout, a thing easily done, as the stream actually swarmed with hungry denizens. Another light passed, and they rose for their last day's journey; for he had informed them, the night before, that one more day would bring them to the place of their destination.

"Do you see yon high mountain?" said the Frenchman, lifting his hand. "At the base of that lies the village where I am to be made happy."

"Not if knives are sharper or water can drown," she said. "I defy you."

"You had better keep your temper," he said. "Heroes will do you no good. Although, if you like to follow them, I suppose it is why you should not. Go on, if it in any way relieves your mind."

"You are insulting."

"No, I am not. I have made up my mind. Having done that, I can't change. It is impossible. Ha! What is that? Look to yourselves, Mohawks. We are attacked!"

He spoke too late. As the last word lingered on his lips his words cracked, and two of the Mohawks had gone to his death. The rest, not knowing what to do, stood spell-bound for a moment, until they saw three men spring from the bushes: Miles, coming in with mighty strides, hatchet and knife in hand, Warren Chadelin, his sword, and a

pistol in his left hand; and Con O'Hara, whirling above his head a stout club which he had prepared while on the road. Red Wing caught up his rifle and pointed it at the giant figure of Meigs. Knowing that his arm was deadly, the hunter stopped, and prepared to drop at the right moment, and escape the bullet if he could. The rifle exploded, but flew wide of the mark, for Dora seized the arm of the savage, just as he pulled the trigger. He turned upon her with a furious cry, but the Frenchman dragged her away and thrust her into the hut, where Katrina had already taken refuge. The distance from which the first shot had been fired was not fifty yards, and before the Frenchman and Indians could follow, the three desperate men were upon them. They had only to turn and fight.

They were brave men, too, and there was something like joy in the face of the Frenchman as his blade crossed that of the young agent, who, like most men of that period, had made sword-play a study. Meigs, assailed by two Indians at once, Red Wing and another, had met them joyfully. But he had a second not to be despised. His shrill whistle called in the dog, who dashed at the throat of the lesser of the two Indians and dragged him down.

"Ah, ha!" yelled Red Wing. "Do you know me? I am Red Wing, chief of the Caughnawaga Mohawks. You shall die!"

"And you shall know me, murderous wretch that you are," cried Meigs. "When you hear my name, you may well tremble. I am the Car-a-men-etcu; I am the Red Slayer—the Lie-Hater of the Mohawk! Now die!"

Red Wing drew a deep breath when he heard that fatal name, but fought as one bound to a stake might fight, desperately and well. Con O'Hara was likewise opposed by two Mohawks. One of them had fallen under a blow from the club, wielded in a scientific manner by Con, but had risen again, and the two were pressing him hard, when they heard Meigs lay claim to the dreaded name of the Red Slayer. They turned and fled, leaving the dog standing guard over the prostrate body of one Indian. Red Wing yielded slowly to the assault of the Car-a-men-etcu, and darted open his mouth with all his power the skilled blade of Warren Chapman

Twice wounded already, and bleeding profusely, Dantern fought nobly. Defeat was not so much a grief to him as the fact that it must come from the man he hated above all others, and in the presence of the girl they both loved. His wrist failed at length, and he received the deadly steel in the breast. Snagging back from the shock, his blade dropped from his hand, and he sank upon one knee, in time to see the Car-a-men-ou affixing his deadly mark, with "Number 6" upon it, on the breast of Red Wing, who lay dead before him. Resting one knee upon the earth, the man looked at him with a glance expressive of fear and despair. He knew now that he was run to earth, and by whom.

"Have you a number for me, wretch?" he cried, panting hard, as the blood gushed from his wound.

"Ay," replied the Red Slayer. "Yours is 'Number 7,' dog. Murderer of all my kindred, die like a wolf at bay! Do you know me? I see you do not. Then I must tell you who I am and why I have hemmed you to your death. Years ago you, with six others, killed a mother and her child near the Muck. I came, not in time to save her, but to track every one of the seven. I swore a great oath never to rest until the seven slept in death, and that you should die last. I have redeemed my oath. Their bones lie scattered from Mineral to Seleneeady, and you are the last. God's teeth grind slowly, but they grind very fine."

He caught the dying man by the breast of the coat, and his hand was wet with the flowing blood. Then, holding aloft a carbine which he had used before, the Red Slayer traced with his bloody finger a gigantic "7," and underneath, "Fulds!" The Franklin glared at him with eyes full of horror and unavailing rage.

"You have kept your oath," he gasped, sinking back upon the grass. "But, you had a daughter. Where is she?"

Dantern came out of the hat, and, as if impelled by a sense of his mission, gazed up at the scene.

"My daughter?" said the hunter. "Even in that I am glad to say you. Will you see her? Then there she stands before you, the child of my dead Laura, as she was before she fell under the broad hawk of the carion lying yonder, who has at last met his doom. Knowing that you are

soiled at every point, that those you have conspired against are happy, guilty wretch, die!"

He raised his hatchet, but Warren interposed.

"Peace, sir," he said. "Do you not see he is dying?"

With a last effort of expiring malignity, the Frenchman raised himself upon his elbow, spat at the Life-Hunter, fell back and died.

"Child," said the stern man, after stooping to lay the fatal number upon Dantern's breast, "you see me as I am, with bloody hands. I know it will be hard for you to take me to your arms, who have been for years an avenger of blood. But, let me tell my story. Having heard it, tell me what I must do."

Dora threw herself weeping into his arms and kissed him fervently.

"Dear father," she cried, "I have heard enough of your story to know that if you shed blood, at least you had strong provocation. I will love you, I will believe in you, trust in you. I will follow, if need be, wherever it is your destiny to wander, for my angel mother's sake."

"I am changed, dear child," said the rough man, kissing her tenderly. "I am little like the picture you have in your possession. These years of suffering have done their work. Peril and I have braved the breezes of all seasons, in the mission which it was our duty to perform. Come with me, and I will show you how it happened that I became the terrible Red Slayer, the Car-a-men-eton, the Spirit of Death, the Life-Hunter, any of the many names by which I am known. Up, Paul. Leave them where they lie, boys. They do not deserve burial."

"Father," said Dora, "I must ask you a favor, the first I ever remember to have asked of you. Bury these men. They have sinned, but is not their death sufficient atonement?"

"Have it as you will," said the Life-Hunter. "I can refuse you nothing."

Warren, assisted by Con, set about the task. They wrapped the Frenchman in a blanket, and dug a grave beside the silent lake. The plow and scythe have passed over it, but he sleeps on, until the summons of the archangel's

trumpet shall call the dead from their graves. The Indian was also laid in the grave, beside the man who had been his companion so many years. This done, the party took the horses and rode away. For two days they were on the march. As they neared the Melawka, Meirs had turned aside from the beaten path, and after traveling about an eighth of a mile, came out into a little clearing in the forest. In the center of this place, which was covered with soft, green grass, and which had been tilled by a white man's hand, was a little mound. Toward this the Life-Hunter took his course, and, when he reached it, cast himself down upon it, moaning like a child in pain. The dog set up a plaintive howl, and lay down beside him. It was a grave, and a little stone at the head bore this inscription:

"L. D. C.
"MURDERED JULY 1ST, 1680."

CHAPTER XII.

THE AVENGER'S STORY.

FOR fully half an hour the hunter did not speak. Then he raised himself by an effort.

"Come away from the grave," he said. "Do you think I can tell her story, looking on the bed I have made her? Sleep well, sweet one, early martyred. I have not been slack in avenging your death. I have done my best. Of those who failed in the work not one remains."

He led the way to a place where a projecting rock hid the grave from view, and there he sat down and made a sign for his companions to do the same.

"I am going to tell you a sad story," he said, "and one I have never told to a human being. It is the story of a man who died by a sudden calamity, which was too much for a strong heart to bear. It is of a man who was high in favor in England, but who had been crazed by the wildness of the country of this great country, and who came here

to retrieve the fortune he had lost in the old world. This man of whom I speak knew that he must labor hard. He was willing to do that, if he could gain fortune in the end, and help to build up this colony, in which he took great pride. He came here, and settled upon the upper Mohawk. He had a wife who was dear to him as life, a little girl six years of age, and a little boy. He built a cabin upon the river yonder, near where Schenectady now stands, and cleared some land. He labored hard, and his wife, though a delicate woman, and nurtured in refinement in her own land, aided him hand and heart.

"They were happy, even in this rude life, and nearly a year went by. This man, whose name I will not speak, went out one day upon a hunt. He was gone all day and came back near nightfall, and when he came to the edge of the clearing he saw a smoke rising slowly to the sky, and opening the bushes, he beheld a sight which never has left him since. He saw his wife lying dead before the door of the blazing cabin which they had tenanted so happily for many months, holding her dead baby in her arms, while around the fire six red demons danced, whirling their hatchets, and making the air resound with their demoniac shouts. Every face in that wild band was pictured upon his brain. They never could leave it, until they slept in death.

"But, there was one face which was worst of all, for it was the face of a white man—a handsome, reckless, boyish face, flushed with the fires of passion—a Frenchman, one of that band of determined partisans who stopped at nothing for the honor and glory of France.

"He sat upon a log of wood near the door of the cabin, just out of the heat, and was looking on with a smile. The wretch exulted in the crime of which he had been guilty. He laughed over the ruin he had made.

"The little girl was struggling in the grasp of a tall Indian, who held her up to look at the flames, while she cried to go to her mother. Still that man stood in the shadow of the trees and watched. Face by face, he studied them all. At last the flame went down and they trooped away, in single file, carrying the girl with them.

"From that time he lived but for one object; to avenge

his wife and find that child. He registered an oath never to spare a Mohawk under any pretense whatever, and never to rest in his search for the girl. He buried the wife and baby in one grave, where he could tend it, and then set out upon his painful search. There is not a tribe in this colony or in Canada, in Pennsylvania or the eastern colonies, in which he has not been in search of the little child."

"Did you know him?" said Warren.

"I knew him well," said the hunter, sternly. "He was a man to keep his word. Let the Mohawks of the Caughnawaga branch say whether he kept his oath or not. He has never spared a Mohawk in all these years, and of the seven who stood about the dead form of his wife and child, not one is left alive!"

"It is a sad story," said Warren, "and all too common in the history of these times. There is hardly a man in the northern part of this province who has not some similar death to avenge."

"Few, like Lim, have lost all. At one fell swoop, they took from him every thing which made life a pleasure. He forsawore the companionship of his kind, in order the better to carry out his plan of revenge. He had no friends; an Ishmaelite, his hand was against every man whose skin was red."

"Marry," said Warren, "who was this lady who lies in yonder grave?"

"She is the lady of whom I spoke, the wife of that unfortunate man, who took her from a sumptuous home in her own land to find a lonely grave in this. Not a little of his sorrow has arisen from this fact. He could not forget how happy they were in merry England, and how happy they might have been. To be sure it was for her sake he dared the perils of the wilderness, but he has condemned himself many times. Also he was not content with what fortune he could find in England. Yet do not blame Lim too much. His hands are hard to lead."

"Then he still lives?"

"How could he die? His work was not yet accomplished."

"Marry," said Warren, suddenly, "you do good if wrong."

in trying to conceal any thing from us. I have long suspected that you had a sad story to tell. This is your own life you have been telling us. No one could see you weeping at yonder grave, and not know, after you told the story, that you are the unfortunate man of whom you speak."

His head dropped on his knee. "I am he! Say no more, Warren. You never knew my wife, and if you had, I think you would not blame me. I am going mad, I think. Every thing looked so dark after she was slain! I could only see her dead face and the faces of those who did the deed."

"I suspect something more," said Warren. "Shall I tell what I think?"

"If you like."

"I know the Frenchman whom you so hated."

"Ha!"

"Captain Louis Dantern, who tried to rob me of my beloved Dora. Dear girl; moderate your grief. Your mother is at rest. After life's fitful fever, she sleeps well."

Dora was weeping bitterly, with her arms about the neck of her father.

"Let us be all in all to each other," she said, "and never forget the sweet lady who lies beneath this soil, and keep it always green."

"It shall be done," said Meigs. "It is time you knew your real name. You are by right Estella Carlyle, descended from as old a house as any in old England. My father was a baronet. My brother now holds his rank. None of them know my fate. Let us go."

They went to Albany, and there, three weeks later, Dora and Warren were married. At the same time Con O'Hara was united to his inamorata, Katrine, and they came back to Schenectady, which had risen from its ashes. Rich Carlyle, the Red Slayer no longer, lived with them, and in the happiness of their society, forgot the great grief which had so well nigh him down, and made him a man of blood. Very often he went accompanied by Peet, to visit the grave of his wife. When the faithful dog died, they buried him at the feet of Laura Carlyle. Few human beings have more sincere mourners than that dumb beast.

Two years after, Roland Carlyle went again to visit his wife's grave. Two days passed, and he did not return. Warren, in alarm lest he should have fallen in with some of his enemies, went in search of him. When he came near the grave he saw him lying on it, with his head upon his arm, as if asleep. Warren touched him on the shoulder. He did not move and the young man turned his face to the light. As he did so, the sun's rays, falling full upon it, showed him that the lad slept. The weary soul had found rest, and Warren breathed a fervent prayer that God would forgive him for his past life, and take him to his rest.

It had been his wish to be buried near his wife, and it was granted. Warren obtained a grant of the land upon which the grave stood, and kept it in the family. Twice a year the young couple visited the grave, and kept the grass green and the flowers bright.

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